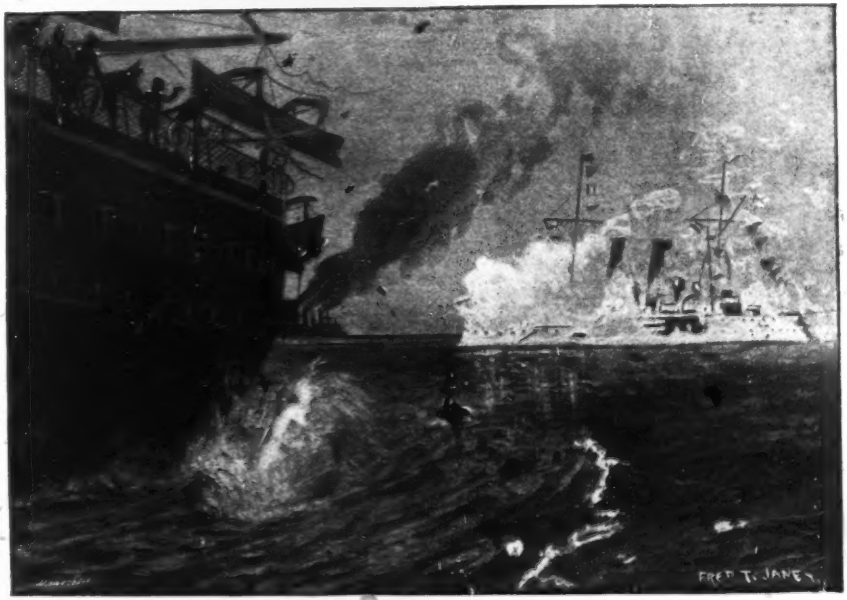
THE DOUBLE EMPEROR



HE FIRED EVERY ONE OF HIS PORT GUNS AT THE PIRATE (p. 162).
[*Frontispiece.*]

THE DOUBLE EMPEROR.

A STORY OF A VAGABOND CUNARDER.

BY

W. LAIRD CLOWES,

AUTHOR OF

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE MARY ROSE," "THE GREAT PERIL," ETC.

"Attali
Ignotus hæres regiam occupavi."
HOR. CARM. II. 18.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.
1894.

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA, PA., U. S. A.

UTOPIA
RBR
C648D

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE BURDEN OF GREATNESS	1
II.	AN IMPERIAL TATTOO	20
III.	BOLTER'S GUN	39
IV.	THE NEW AIDE-DE-CAMP	59
V.	KIDNAPPED	80
VI.	MR. HOODLUM IS SURPRISED	101
VII.	INCONSISTENCY	123
VIII.	THE TRIUMPH OF COLONEL SNAGGS	144
IX.	COLONEL SNAGGS'S DISAPPOINTMENT	166
X.	ADRIFT	188
XI.	HOME	211

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

'HE FIRED EVERY ONE OF HIS PORT GUNS AT THE PIRATE' - - - - - *Frontispiece*

THE EMPEROR MEETS VON DALHOFF - *To face p.* 22

THE BOLTER GUN EXPERIMENT - „ 56

KIDNAPPED! - - - - „ 84

OUT OF THE MIST CAME H.M.S. 'TOURMALINE' „ 146

FINDING THE DOLLARS - - - „ 164

THE LAST OF THE 'PHILISTIA' - - „ 210

'THE WHOLE AFFAIR OCCUPIED LESS THAN FIVE SECONDS' - - - - „ 216

THE DOUBLE EMPEROR

CHAPTER I.

THE BURDEN OF GREATNESS.

'Say what you will,' declared the Emperor, as he cracked an egg, 'it is a dog's life, or little better.'

'Only that in this case,' suggested the Field-Marshal, 'the dog, if I may borrow your Majesty's expression, is able to experience the satisfaction that arises from duty done; and that is surely the greatest reward of existence.'

'I grant you that,' said the Emperor. 'The ordinary dog does not perhaps enjoy that satisfaction. Yet my work, even apart from my responsibilities, is terribly, painfully wearing. To properly fill my position I ought to have two bodies and four hands at least; to be able to thrive on a couple of hours' sleep a night; to be able to dispense with all regularity of meals and exercise; to possess the digestion of an ostrich, the strength of an elephant, the courage of a lion, and the cunning of a serpent—to have all or any of these under perfect and continuous control; to be indifferent to sport, pleasure

and the delights of friendly intercourse, and to contentedly sacrifice every intellectual enjoyment. I have no time to study even those things which would conduce to my greater usefulness. To indulge any natural affection for the arts and sciences is almost impossible. Each day seems to end ere it has fairly dawned, and to leave me with more than half my day's work undone. I tell you again, Count, it is a dog's life.'

It was Carl, King of Ruhland and Lusatian Emperor, who, breakfasting with his old friend and military tutor Count Stark, made these dissatisfied remarks.

No one who knew him only as a public character would have readily believed that the young monarch could find his magnificent position a seriously irksome one; for did not the Emperor possess nearly everything that the mind of man could desire? and did it not look as if almost all things which he did not actually possess were within his grasp? Twenty-four years of age, the inheritor of a kingdom the history of which was a record of bravery, devotion and patriotism, and the wearer of an imperial crown which symbolized the unity of one of the most capable races in the world, he was strikingly handsome, strong, healthy, and beloved by his people. His ministers were as able as they were loyal, the commerce and finances of his country were flourishing; there was no cloud on the horizon of foreign affairs, and socialism and anarchy, though introduced here and there among the Lusatians, found little whereon to batten, and caused no anxieties as to the present and small fears as to the future.

Nor were the Emperor's domestic surroundings in any sense unenviable. He was still, it is true, a bachelor, but he was suitably betrothed to the lovely Princess Griselda of Stormarn, who, in her turn, was devoted to him; and in the meantime he enjoyed the society of his only sister, the Princess Nannette, a clever and beautiful girl of nineteen, who was scarcely less the idol of the empire than she was the idol of her brother, and who in song and story was known as the Pearl of Ruhland. Nor did he lack faithful friends and admirable servants. He had been wisely brought up among the most distinguished men of the nation. Not only the Lusatian statesmen, generals and admirals, but also the poets, the scientists, the artists, the philosophers, the novelists and even the journalists of the country, had from his early youth been admitted to his familiarity; and, though court etiquette in Ruhland was as strict as it was anywhere, it may be truly said that the monarch was in complete touch with all the most worthy and the most representative of his subjects, and, in addition, with no small number of distinguished foreigners.

Typical, as regards ability and devotion, of hundreds of the Emperor's trusted counsellors and servants, was the old war-wolf, Leonhard, Count Stark, who sat with him at breakfast that morning. The Count had fought and bled for his majesty's father and grandfather, and, though upwards of seventy, would have been delighted to fight and bleed for the Emperor Carl also. A little, well-preserved, ruddy-cheeked, keen-eyed man, he looked, save for his uniform, more like a tenant-farmer

than a great soldier; and even in his conversation, which was free, desultory, and humorous, there was little to recall the Lusatian officer. Indeed, there was about him something which, once or twice in his history, short-sighted people had mistaken for want of dignity. Not until they had ventured, in consequence, to presume had they discovered their error, and learnt too late that the good-humoured little man's kindness was reserved only for those who did not abuse it, and that behind it lay a frowning and absolutely impregnable fortress, barring every advance on the part of impudence and impertinence.

The only other breakfaster in the Emperor's private apartments in the royal palace in Sandburg was the Princess Nannette; and if mature wisdom was well represented by the Field-Marshal, and manly strength by the Emperor, the fresh charms of girlhood were as favourably personified in the Pearl of Ruhland. Blue-eyed and fair-haired like the traditional damsels of Lusatia, she was very far, nevertheless, from possessing the lack of colour and expression that has often been attributed as a characteristic to the daughters of her race. Her wealth of hair had in it all the shades of gold; her eyebrows were dark and well-marked; her eyelashes also were dark, and long as well; dimples played over her rounded cheeks, and her complexion, like that of her brother, suggested health and high vitality, though it was at the same time exquisitely soft and delicate as the sunny side of a peach. In her simple dress of white, the Princess conveyed much the same

kind of impression as is conveyed to most people by the newly-opened hedgerow flower from which the dew of morning has not yet been shaken. There was that about her which was essentially natural, wholesome and pure. It did one good and seemed to make one nobler to look upon her.

'It is all because the Emperor is so terribly energetic,' said the Princess; 'he insists upon working by night as well as by day, and I'm sure that cannot be really necessary.'

'Life is very short, your Royal Highness,' replied the Count, 'and one must get into it as much as one may. I have over seventy years to look back upon. The days I have wasted rise up like ghosts behind me. I wish I had fewer such ghosts; unhappily, I have very many. May his Majesty, when he, too, is old, be less tormented than I am by the memories of the past.'

'Thanks, Count,' said the Emperor. 'I shall have to work hard, indeed, if your prayer is to be fulfilled. I assure you it is not the hard work that I mind; it is the useless work, the formal work, the unproductive work, the merely mechanical work, which could be done as efficiently by a well-constructed automaton, that I regard as a burden. Why, the ceremonial work alone takes half my time.'

'Surely you busy yourself too much with details,' suggested the Princess.

'Not I! Every man ought to attempt to master details if he would properly understand generalities. It is the formality of having to listen to the reading of

some address which I have already perused and sanctioned; it is the farce of having to sign certain documents when any secretary's signature, or a mere seal or stamp, would suffice; it is especially the indignity of having to pose so often as a doll in uniform, that I object to. For certain functions of State, a mechanical Emperor, to be wound up every morning, or to be driven by steam, or to be set in action by the placing of a coin in a convenient slot, would do capitally. In the meantime the living Emperor might be either doing useful work for others or improving himself. What a blessing a double would be to me!'

'He might be a curse also,' laughed the Princess Nannette. 'Recollect the history of Smerdis, of Lambert Simnel and of Demetrius.'

'Oh, of course I should be careful to have him marked,' said the Emperor, 'so that there would be no danger of confusion. But until this wonderful double turns up, I must, I take it, continue to do as best I can, and to waste myself, with as good grace as possible, for the supposed welfare of Lusatia.'

He glanced at a paper which lay beside him and made a wry face.

'Is to-day a very bad one, then?' asked the Princess.

'About as unsatisfactory as usual. But you can judge for yourself.' And the Emperor picked up the paper, and read from it the following record of the day's engagements: '8.30, meeting of the military cabinet; 9.30, inspection of the guard; 10.15, audience of the Spanish Ambassador; 11, audience of the Chinese

Envoy; 11.30, audience of the burgomaster of Sandburg; 12, laying of the foundation-stone of the Aeronautical Institution; 1.15, interview with the Chancellor; 2, interview with the President of the Council of Ministers; 3, inspection of the new barracks at Horn; 4, dinner with the officers at Horn; 5.15, witness trials of a new military balloon at Horn; 6, sign various papers, commissions, orders, etc.; 6.20, receive deputation from the Society for the Extension of Lusatian Industries; 7, review procession of students from the balcony of the palace; 8, family dinner—if I can find time for it; 9, sign more papers, etc.; 9.45, go by special train to—well, never mind whither—to alarm the garrison. And I imagine,' continued the Emperor, 'that I shall not get back until breakfast-time to-morrow, and that, if I get any sleep at all, it will be in the railway-carriage going and coming.'

'Thank Heaven that I am not an Emperor!' ejaculated the Princess.

'You well may, my dear sister. In my daily programme there is, I notice, no provision for regular meals, or for going to bed. I am theoretically supposed, it seems, to be always up, and to be able to change my uniform with the rapidity of lightning. A woman can sit up all night, but she cannot change her costume in an instant, so that our law has rightly laid down that no woman can succeed to the throne of Ruhland and the Lusatian Empire. You understand now how wise is this provision of the Constitution.'

'I am glad that at least you have time to be frivolous,'

said the Princess, who rose, went round to the back of her brother's chair, and kissed him on the forehead. 'When a man can be frivolous things are well with him. Is it not so, Count?'

'Your Royal Highness is right,' replied the Field-Marshal. 'And bright spirits can pull a man out of many a difficulty. Yet there is no doubt that his Majesty is overworked. Your Royal Highness must persuade him to spare himself.'

'I need no persuasion,' declared the Emperor. 'I only want to be convinced that if I spare myself nothing else will suffer. Now, the Chinese Envoy comes here to-day. It is true that we cannot converse without the assistance of an interpreter, and that, for all practical purposes, he might settle his business with the Chancellor, or even with some subordinate Foreign Office official. But if I don't receive him he will consider himself slighted. Again, I have to lay the foundation-stone of the Aeronautical Institute. Any bricklayer can lay it better than I. Yet if I do not officiate the matter will not be fully noticed in to-morrow's papers, and the desired publicity —which is to attract subscriptions— will not be secured. I ought later to drive in the park, but, as I shall not have time, the people will be disappointed. Then, as to the alarming of the garrison. An army corps commander, or you, Count, might do it; but you know that the Emperor is supposed to see things that ordinary critics do not notice, no matter whether he be sleepy or not; and that my sudden apparition will produce a much greater degree of promptness, smartness, and general

tension than even yours would, and this in spite of all your experience and reputation, and of the merited enthusiasm with which my whole army regards you.'

The veteran bowed deprecatingly.

'Sire,' said he, 'I am only an honoured servant of your Majesty.'

'Say, rather, my dear friend and counsellor. But, Nannette, look how selfish I am. Young and strong, I nevertheless consider how I can spare myself, while I take no thought for the Field-Marshal, whom, on these nocturnal garrison-alarming expeditions, I always need at my side. I must spare you, Count, in the future, and endeavour to get assistance from an officer to whom these exertions will be less trying.'

'Sire,' exclaimed the Count, 'a soldier who cannot mount his horse at all hours, who cannot sleep in a cattle-truck or do without sleep now and then, and who cannot follow his chief, should be granted his demission. Thank God, I am not, I believe, an invalid; but if there be any doubt in your Majesty's mind as to my continued usefulness, I pray your Majesty to graciously permit me to spend my last days where my weaknesses and ailments can be suitably nursed.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the Emperor, frankly extending his hand and pressing that of the Field-Marshal. 'But because a regiment is the best in the army we do not march it off its legs; and because an officer is the best in the world we do not kill him with work. Do not be angry with me. You shall accompany me so long as you will. And now we must attend the meeting of my

military cabinet, for it is half-past eight. Adieu, Nannette, until Providence and duty let me see you again.'

The Princess sprang to her brother's side as he rose from the table, took both his hands in hers, stood affectionately before him, and then smiled happily as he pinched her cheek and turned away.

It is unnecessary to follow the Emperor through all the duties of that well-filled day. His work was a continued struggle against time on the one hand, and superficiality on the other. His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador had been allotted three-quarters of an hour for his audience. He had important affairs to talk about, but he was so courtly in his speech and so deliberate in his methods that he allowed half an hour to elapse ere he fairly attacked his subject. In order to avoid having to bow out the grandee before he had finished his business, the Emperor, instead of merely listening, suddenly interrupted his visitor, and, putting a few curt and searching questions, speedily made himself master of the various points, and even then had time to return a suitable reply. With the Chinese Envoy he was driven to pursue much the same course. In fact, he habitually pursued it with diplomatists; but, though he thus economized time, he gained a notoriety for brusqueness and sharpness that caused many, who did not know him intimately, to regard him as lacking in the more trifling of conventional decencies. His ministers, who had greater experience of him, upon the whole rather liked the Emperor's habits in this respect. The interview with the Chancellor was that day, as usual, little more than an examination of the

subject by the sovereign. The Emperor, as he entered the room, nodded his greeting, and at the same moment put a question; and, as he received replies, he continued to put questions until his curiosity was satisfied. His last question was generally, 'And is there anything else?' And, as a rule, his previous questions had been so pertinent and so anticipatory of all that the minister had desired to relate, that there was 'nothing else.' Thereupon it was the Emperor's practice to quickly and concisely issue his orders and to end the interview. 'If,' as he once said to Count Stark, 'it be a business of getting lemon-juice, the right method, depend upon it, is to squeeze your lemon. There may, of course, be other ways, but there is no way more obvious or more effectual; and when your lemon is anxious to yield its juice, it is surely unkind not to expedite the yield by squeezing promptly.'

By dint of adhering strictly to his time-table, the Emperor was able to enjoy his family dinner-party at the palace at eight o'clock.

It was called the 'family dinner,' because it had always been called so. His Majesty's father and grandfather had utilized the meal as an occasion for meeting all their near relatives. The Emperor Carl, having very few near relatives except the Princess Nannette, had changed the character of his 'family dinner,' and had chosen to make it an occasion for meeting not so much the members of his family as his more intimate friends in all walks of life. It was his chief, and, indeed, almost his only regular recreation, and, although it was generally some-

what hurried, it was invariably a bright and pleasant function; for, for at least an hour after eight o'clock every evening, the Emperor, when he dined at home, threw aside the cares of State and became the private gentleman at the head of his table.

The party always consisted of ten all told, and was usually made up chiefly of men. On this particular evening it was a characteristic one, and may, therefore, be briefly described. On the Emperor's right sat an English Princess; next to her was the Russian Ambassador; next to him was M. Alphonse Puget, the distinguished French engineer; and between him and the Princess Nannette was Count Stark, a frequent guest at these dinners. On the Princess's right sat Baron Stoll, the great African traveller; next him came Madame Watzka, the Hungarian novelist and poetess; on her right was Mr. Esek Hoodlum, of New York; and on the Emperor's left was Vice-Admiral Spott, of the imperial Lusatian navy. Precedence and ceremony were little observed; everyone was at his ease; and, although some of the gentlemen wore uniform, they only did so because they seldom wore anything else. The Ambassador, Puget, Stoll, and Hoodlum, were in plain evening dress. Indeed, it was the rule of these dinners that every guest was to appear as he would appear if he were dining in his own house. The Court newsman never mentioned the names of those present; and neither in the room and appointments, nor in the service, was there anything to remind the observer that the host was not some private Lusatian gentleman enjoying the society of

friends of his own rank. Once only in the course of the evening did the routine of proceedings differ from that of an ordinary dinner-party. It was when, at a recognised moment, the host rose, bowed to the Princess Nannette, and, glass in hand, said: 'My dear sister, let us drink to our Fatherland.' And it was the custom for the guests thereupon to rise and drink the toast in silence, turning meanwhile first to the Emperor and then to the Princess.

Of those present on this particular evening the only one requiring more description than he has already received is Mr. Esek Hoodlum, of New York.

Mr. Hoodlum was a young man of the Emperor's age, and his intimacy with the Emperor dated from the time when both had been students at the University of Rostock. A restless traveller, he made Sandburg his headquarters whenever he was on the continent of Europe, and, while there, always saw a good deal of the Emperor, who valued the American bluntness and outspoken honesty of his friend, and found in Hoodlum's unconventional ways a pleasant relaxation from the stiffness and formality of ordinary Court and military life.

There are Americans and Americans, and, although the assertion may not be in accordance with the received opinion in Europe, it is nevertheless a fact that, among Americans of the better sort, there is a large class the characteristics of which are not over-reaching 'smartness,' vulgar impertinence, and unscrupulous acuteness. Its characteristics are honesty, straightforwardness, and

extreme simplicity. Hoodlum belonged to this class, or he would scarcely have been honoured with the Emperor's friendship; and he was a man who, unlike many of the Emperor's friends, was absolutely independent and disinterested. But, though he possessed some ability and much native common-sense, his very openness and simplicity rendered him perhaps a rather dangerous associate for a monarch who had in his hand the keeping of the world's peace and the secrets of a dozen cabinets. A great personal admirer of the Emperor, Hoodlum seldom let pass an occasion for sounding the praises of his hero. All his friends knew that he was much in the Emperor's confidence; and the American probably saw no more reason for disguising the fact than for disguising his intimacy with any other man of character and reputation. Had all men been as honest as he, no harm would have resulted. But, unfortunately, although for four-and-twenty years Esek Hoodlum had lived in the midst of the great world, and had even managed to see much of it, he failed to realize that it is a scheming and, indeed, a very wicked world, against which the really prudent man should ever be on his guard.

'By the way, when do you sail, Hoodlum?' asked the Emperor, as dinner was nearing its conclusion.

'I go to England the day after to-morrow, sir, and shall leave Liverpool for New York on Monday,' replied the American.

'Well, recollect that we shall be glad to see you back again. You must be here in the autumn, if you can, for the Grand Manœuvres. They are to be held this

year somewhere on the coast, so that, in addition to two army corps, the fleet may take part. Is not that what we want to arrange, my dear Admiral?'

'That is what I venture to hope, sire,' said Admiral Spott. 'It will teach both branches of your Majesty's service some useful lessons concerning co-operation.'

'You hear, Hoodlum?' laughed the Emperor. 'That is Spott's way of saying that if you come and bring your camera you will find plenty to do. Take care, though, that we don't arrest you as a spy. Be here by the third week in September, and you will be in time. Immediately after the manœuvres there will be something else for you to see, for October the 20th is to be my wedding-day. I invite you to be present.'

'I shall come with pleasure, sir,' said Hoodlum simply. 'In the meantime I heartily wish you every happiness in life.'

'I am sure you do, my dear fellow,' returned the Emperor. 'And now, do you feel inclined to come to-night and see me wake up the garrison of Bomberg? The Field-Marshal and I start almost immediately. You only need a warm coat, plenty of cigars, and a flask of brandy; and if you haven't them in the palace, I dare say we can lend you them.'

'I should immensely like to come,' replied Hoodlum eagerly.

The Emperor rose and bowed to each of his guests.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, 'I regret that some of us must leave you. We have business to attend to. But I beg you not yet to depart. My sister the Princess

will be charmed to be favoured a little longer with your society. You, gentlemen, will later, I do not doubt, find your way to the billiard-room. The Admiral here plays a strong game. I bid you good-night, and thank you heartily for your company.' And with a bow to all in general he turned towards the door, which, however, he did not reach before the Princess Nannette caught him up and bade him good-night.

The Emperor's nocturnal garrison-alarming expeditions were romantic affairs, and, as is often the case with romantic affairs, decidedly uncomfortable. It was raining hard; but it was the Emperor's practice, when starting on these journeys, always to walk to the station, for he feared lest the passage of his well-known carriage through the streets of the capital might arouse people to a consciousness of what he was about to do, and so lead to the despatch in the threatened directions of warning telegrams, which might neutralize the value of the projected surprise.

Through the pelting rain, therefore, the party trudged. The Emperor and the Field-Marshal, muffled up in their uniform greatcoats, betrayed no signs of rank that were likely to attract the attention of casual observers, and Hoodlum, bearing an umbrella and walking with them, was not in any way remarkable. They had a mile to walk, and when at length they reached the Eastern Station, they were all decidedly damp. The Emperor led the way at once to the stationmaster's office, and entering, confronted that alarmed dignitary with the pithy announcement:

'The usual train must be ready in ten minutes. Secrecy must be observed. The destination is Bomberg, and all traffic must, if necessary, be stopped.' Then, throwing open his coat, his Majesty took up a position with his back to the stove, opened his cigar-case, offered it to the Field-Marshal and to Hoodlum, and lighted a cigar for himself.

'We don't indulge ourselves much on these occasions,' he said to the American. 'If I ordered out my saloon carriage everyone in the station would know of my being here, so we take sometimes a third-class carriage, sometimes a horse-box, and sometimes — only sometimes, remember—an ordinary first-class. It is always interesting to speculate upon what our excellent and judicious friend the stationmaster will deem most suitable. We leave it to his judgment, and I must say that he usually makes us sufficiently uncomfortable. But even when he sends us in a horse-box, he invariably provides plenty of clean straw; and the Field-Marshal will tell you that clean straw is the healthiest of all materials for sleeping upon.'

'Oh, we generally fare very well,' laughed Count Stark. 'In real campaigning, you know, the straw, as often as not, is not clean. Frequently, too, there is no straw at all, and there is generally no horse-box. Yet I have slept very soundly on the bare ground under the stars, and I remember, also, to have seen his Majesty's royal father very soundly asleep in the manger of a ruined cowshed. It is chiefly the idle who cannot sleep anywhere.'

The stationmaster, who had gone out to make the requisite arrangements, returned, watch in hand.

'The train,' he said, 'will, if your Majesty pleases, start in four minutes.'

'And what is it to-night?' asked the Emperor, laughing.

'Your Majesty will, if it pleases your Majesty, travel in a horse-box. It is a new one, may it please your Majesty, and it has not yet been used.'

'I told you how it would be, Hoodlum,' said the Emperor, as he buttoned his coat again and knocked off the ash of his cigar against the stove. 'But we are unusually favoured in having a new horse-box. Lead on, stationmaster.'

The official, taking up a lantern from the floor, led the way through the great station to an uncovered and ill-lighted siding, into which an express engine was at that moment backing the selected horse-box, to which was also attached a break-van.

Two or three guards and porters only were on the little platform, which was soaked with splashing rain. They saluted, not because two of the travellers were an Emperor and a Field-Marshal, but because they were officers; and as the vehicle came to a standstill, they threw open the door.

Hoodlum saw with relief that the interior was not quite so uncomfortable as the Emperor's conversation had led him to expect. It was well lighted; it contained chairs and a table, and in one corner stood a camp bedstead covered with rugs.

'You are taking care of us, indeed, my good station-master,' said the Emperor. 'This is luxury itself. Get in, gentlemen; we will start.'

A minute later the special train was on its way to Bomberg, and the Field-Marshal was engaged in a determined conflict of courtesy as to the occupancy of the solitary bed. He declared that he could not think of accepting it. The Emperor declared that for his part he would not while the Count lay on straw; and the result was, that while the Emperor and the Field-Marshal curled themselves up in adjoining stalls on opened trusses of straw, Hoodlum gravitated naturally to what appeared to him to be the more comfortable place of repose. But he was wrong. Long ere the train reached Bomberg, the American was pitched fairly on to the floor; for the springs of the horse-box were somewhat stiff, and, being on the floor, he remained there on a pile of rugs, and found himself tolerably at ease.

The spire of Bomberg Cathedral glistened in the bright moonlight, and its lively chimes were striking for half-past one as the train, which had travelled down without a stoppage, rolled into a station illuminated only by the hand-lamps of half a dozen sleepy men.

CHAPTER II.

AN IMPERIAL TATTOO.

Bomberg was the headquarters of the second division of the 21st Lusatian Army Corps, and the actual garrison of the town consisted of two infantry regiments, a regiment of Uhlans, two mounted batteries of artillery, a company of engineers, a pontoon train, and ammunition and provision columns, the whole under Lieutenant-General Beck.

'Conduct us at once to the Lieutenant-General's house!' cried the Emperor to a porter against whom he stumbled as he leapt to the platform before the train had quite come to a standstill.

The man saluted, and obeyed without a word. He may not have known who the speaker was, but he did know that he was an officer of high rank, and that was for him sufficient. He went off at once, lamp in hand, leading the way, first into a deserted and unlighted lane, and thence through broader but equally dark and empty streets to the centre of the town. Not a soul was encountered on the route. A few stray cats slunk aside out of the bright moonlight into the shadows of the

toppling houses, but there were no other signs of life in the place, for, on ordinary occasions, Bomberg goes early to bed.

Outside the Lieutenant-General's quarters stood a couple of striped sentry-boxes, and before these, with mechanical regularity and rifle on shoulder, paced two sturdy infantrymen, who, as they heard the clanking of swords, stopped short to listen, and who, as soon as they saw the approaching party, probably divined what was about to happen.

Hoodlum was never able to recall the exact sequence of the events of the next few minutes. There was a rattle of arms; there were two or three short sharp words of command; an upper window of the Lieutenant-General's house was violently flung open; some undistinguishable orders were hurriedly shouted in the room above; a bugle brayed; other bugles at all kinds of distances took up its raucous notes; bells were rung; whistles were blown; rockets were fired into the calm sky; and in almost less time than it takes to relate, the door of the house let out first one and then several officers, and the great square in front began to fill with troops who streamed into it, with a rush, from all directions.

The Emperor, watch in hand, stood on the steps looking on. Presently there was led up to him a charger, which he mounted, but at once took out his watch again. Aides-de-camp and mounted orderlies galloped hither and thither. Strains of music and roll of drum began to float upon the breeze. One infantry regiment, that

of Kaiser Franz (No. 240), marched bodily in at the double in nine minutes from the giving of the alarm, and the Emperor raised his eyes and beamed his satisfaction at the grizzled colonel whose command had done so well. In fourteen minutes the whole garrison, horse, foot, artillery, and train, was assembled, and the Lieutenant-General proudly reported the fact. In the meantime mounts had been brought for the Field-Marshal and for Hoodlum.

It was a marvellous transformation, from stillness and sleep to the clash of arms and the most intense alertness of several thousands of men and horses. The Emperor had come provided with written orders. These he handed to the Lieutenant-General, who, promptly giving the necessary commands, emptied the square almost as rapidly as the alarm had filled it. The troops were marched out of the town by various routes, and for the next hour a lively sham fight was in progress in the suburbs. Then followed the march past, and the delivery of the Emperor's criticism on the night's work.

It was during the criticism that something happened which had an important bearing, not only upon the Emperor's subsequent career, but also upon the whole subsequent welfare of the imperial dynasty, and, indeed, of the empire.

Sitting on horseback, in the midst of a brilliant circle of officers whose faces were lighted up by the flames of a score of torches, the Emperor had occasion, in the course of his remarks, to consult some pencilled notes which he had made from time to time since his arrival at Bom-

THE EMPEROR MEETS VON DALHOFF.

berg. Looking up again, previous to resuming his comments, he saw, gazing straight at him, a face which, for an instant, he took to be some mysterious reflection of his own. The effect was so startling that at first he could not continue, but simply returned the gaze.

Yet, as he noticed that though the face seemed to be his, the helmet and uniform belonging to it were certainly not, he realized that it was not a case of reflection, but a case of curious resemblance. Turning to Count Stark, who was at his side, he whispered hurriedly: 'Find out for me the name of that young captain of the Kaiser Franz Regiment, my dear Count,' and then went on, as before, with his praises, his strictures, his recommendations and his comparisons.

Half an hour later he was once more at the station.

Concealment being no longer necessary, the party did not return to Sandburg in the horse-box, but in an ordinary first-class carriage, and the departure of the train was respectfully witnessed by the Lieutenant-General and all his staff, who stood stiffly at the salute as the engine steamed away, and were, no doubt, much more relieved than they appeared to be at the gratifying manner in which they had passed through a very trying ordeal.

'Excellent! excellent, my dear Count!' cried the Emperor, as he sank down on the cushions and rubbed his hands. 'Everything ready in fourteen minutes by my watch. That fellow Beck has hair on his teeth! And the Kaiser Franz Regiment! It was a piece of enchantment, for their barracks are nearly a quarter of

a mile from the square. I shall write specially to Colonel von Groll to express my satisfaction. The first battalion especially was magnificent in every way. What is the name of the adjutant? I must commend him in my letter.'

'The adjutant, sire,' said the Field-Marshal, 'is, strange to say, the same young captain whose name your Majesty inquired about during the criticism.'

'All the better,' said the Emperor. 'He is a smart fellow, I see.'

'I have asked a few questions, and I find that he is certainly a most admirable officer—one of the youngest captains, in fact, in your Majesty's army. He has distinguished himself in all possible directions; he bears the highest character; and both Colonel von Groll and the lieutenant-colonel of the battalion seem to regard him as a perfect military, intellectual, and social prodigy.'

'Better and better,' commented the Emperor. 'Did you speak to him?'

'I did, sire, and I was much impressed, not only by his manner, but also, if your Majesty will forgive me, by his striking resemblance to yourself.'

'I thought that would impress you,' said the Emperor. 'It impressed me, almost to the extent of rendering me speechless for an instant. That is why I asked you to make inquiries. But what is his name?'

'His name,' replied the Field-Marshal, 'is Wilhelm, Baron von Dalhoff. His late father was a brave comrade of mine forty years ago, and was well and favourably

known to your imperial grandfather, who, if I recollect rightly, decorated him with his own cross on the bloody field of Virecourt.'

'*Patre claro filius clarior*, eh? I am very glad to hear it. I think I see a future for Captain von Dalhoff. But I must first speak to him. Will you oblige me, my dear Count, by having him ordered to Sandburg and directed to report himself to me at the palace? And what did you think of the smartness with which the garrison turned out, Hoodlum?'

'It was marvellous!' returned the American. 'Troops so alert in peace time will not easily be caught napping in war.'

'Well, don't hide your light under a bushel, my dear fellow. Say the same to all the world. It will not do any harm to Lusatia or to the peace of Europe. There's a fine subject for your next article in *Scrarpner's Magazine*, "How we Alarmed Bomberg." And now, gentlemen, I purpose to sleep until we get to Sandburg.'

The Emperor made himself comfortable in his corner; the others followed his example, and in less than a quarter of an hour all three were in the land of dreams.

Here it may be explained that Hoodlum, though a man of sufficient private fortune, was always willing, as opportunities arose in the course of his travels, to contribute to journals and magazines in his own country and in England, and that the Emperor had more than once found it convenient to take advantage of this fact, and of his well-known intimacy with Hoodlum, to make public in an unofficial or tentative manner views or

schemes which he did not deem it desirable to air in a more formal way. The benefits were, of course, reciprocal. Hoodlum was raised to a position which enabled him to command good pay for his literary work, and the Emperor not only secured a trustworthy 'organ,' but at the same time avoided incurring direct responsibilities which might be irksome, if not absolutely impolitic.

At a quarter to eight the imperial train steamed safely into the Eastern Station in Sandburg, where the Emperor's carriage was awaiting him. Hoodlum said his adieux, and took a fiacre to his hotel, there to prepare for his journey to America by way of England; and the Emperor and the Field-Marshal were driven at a rapid pace to the palace, at a window of which the Princess Nannette was watching for their return.

It need scarcely be said that the Field-Marshal lost no time in communicating with the Lieutenant-General at Bomberg, and in obtaining the attendance in Sandburg of Baron von Dalhoff.

The Baron was, in truth, one of the most able and ambitious of the younger officers in the Lusatian army, and had always cherished warm hopes of usefulness and distinction. But even in the wildest dreams of his youth he probably never imagined the peculiar kind of sphere in which, as will be seen, he was destined to attain honours and celebrity. His aspirations were in all likelihood limited to the command of an army-corps, or, at least, to the rank of field-marshal, though he may have even thought of the chancellorship, for in Lusatia there is no ministerial post too influential to be beyond

the grasp of the capable soldier. Assuredly he can have never expected any still loftier career. Yet there was one awaiting him.

The Emperor was accustomed to do much upon his own initiative and without consultation, either with his ministers or with his private friends. It is by no means certain, nay, it is exceedingly unlikely, that all these would have approved of the step which his Majesty purposed to take with regard to Von Dalhoff; but none of them was asked for his opinion upon the subject, nor were any of them, Count Stark only excepted, informed of what had been done, even when the step had been actually taken. Princess Nannette herself was not forewarned of the project, although her brother had very few confidences which he did not share with her. Indeed, as will appear, she was only told when it became necessary that she must be.

When, therefore, the Baron arrived at the palace, the Emperor alone received him.

Subsequent events have led to the making public of all the details of that interview, which many rank beyond doubt as the most curious interview that ever took place between a sovereign and a subject.

The Baron was shown into an unoccupied room. Upon a table near the window lay two or three pieces of lint, a cork stuck full of needles, and a small bottle containing some black liquid.

The Emperor entered immediately afterwards, and, mechanically returning Von Dalhoff's salute, locked both doors of the room, and then, taking up a position with

his back to the fireplace, ordered his visitor to be seated.

'You are Baron von Dalhoff, Captain in the Kaiser Franz Infantry Regiment?' he demanded.

'I have the honour, your Majesty.'

'Your age is?'

'Twenty-four, sire.'

'Your height is?'

'Six feet, sire.'

'Are you aware that in age and height, as well as in general appearance, you bear an extraordinary resemblance to myself?'

'I am, your Majesty.'

'People have often remarked it, eh?'

'Frequently, sire.'

'Your voice even is, I notice, like mine. Has that further similarity been brought to your attention?'

'It has, sire.'

'The whole resemblance is, in fact, notorious?'

'If your Majesty will forgive me,' said the Baron, 'my nickname, given, I submit, with all respect, is "the Kaiser."'

'I felt sure of something of the sort. And I perceive that you further cultivate the resemblance by wearing your hair and moustache as I wear mine.'

The Captain reddened a little, but said nothing.

'I desire no permanent change to be made,' continued the Emperor quickly. 'I am not displeased; far from it. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Do you speak English, French, Italian?'

'English and French with ease, Italian less so, sire,' replied Von Dalhoff.

'And Russian?'

'Russian I also speak,' answered the Captain.

'Very good, Baron. Now have the goodness to take off your uniform, and to put on this one;' and the Emperor, opening a cupboard in the wall, took out a uniform exactly similar to the one which he was himself wearing.

Baron von Dalhoff was at a loss to know what to make of the Emperor's order, but at once proceeded to obey it. In three minutes he was properly arrayed in the uniform of the Imperial Guard. The Emperor watched him with interest, and when he was dressed examined him carefully, and placed him in front of a long mirror, in which the figures of the two men side by side could be seen simultaneously.

'Excellent!' was the Emperor's comment, after elaborate inspection. 'Twist your moustache a little more upwards, and you will do admirably, unless, indeed, you can suggest some other improvement.'

'I appear to have the honour to resemble your Majesty in all outward respects,' said Von Dalhoff.

'But there must be a further test,' remarked the Emperor. 'In the next room my sister, the Princess Nannette, is writing. I call her familiarly "Nan" or "Pearl." I have left on the table at which she is sitting a pocket-book of red morocco, bearing my cipher. It is concealed beneath some papers. I desire you, assuming my character, to go in and to ask her for the

pocket-book. You will leave the door open, so that I may hear what passes. On no account are you to betray yourself. Should she ask any question you must consult your common-sense for a reply. Then return to me here.'

Poor Von Dalhoff felt extremely nervous and uncomfortable.

'Excuse me, sire,' he said awkwardly, 'but to carry out your orders successfully I must know one thing. May I venture to ask upon what terms your Majesty is with her royal highness?'

'On what terms?' laughed the Emperor. 'Why, what would you have? We are brother and sister. Have you a sister?'

'Yes, sire.'

'And are you on good terms with her?'

'The best in the world, your Majesty.'

'Good! Those will do. The Princess and I are still as we were when we were children together, and God grant that we may never be otherwise. Now, I will unlock this door. Immediately beyond it is a second door, but it is not locked. Open it, and go in boldly.'

Von Dalhoff steadied himself. He would have vastly preferred to storm a battery, but, having his orders, he obeyed them. It relieved him to find as he opened the second door that the Princess sat with her back towards it, and did not look up as he entered.

'Nan,' he said boldly, 'where is that red pocket-book of mine? It is somewhere on your table.'

Even then the Princess did not look up, but continued

to write hurriedly, as if anxious to finish a sentence before allowing herself to be disturbed.

He went forward, placed one hand on her shoulder and one on the table, and bent over her.

'We *are* busy to-day,' he said; 'but give me my pocket-book; I want it, little one.'

In an instant she had dropped her pen, started up, and thrown both arms around his neck.

'Oh, how nice of you, Carl!' she cried. 'You never called me "little one" before. It sounds so pleasant. You are a dear, good boy! But you must often call me "little one," remember;' and without a shade of suspicion she kissed him warmly on both cheeks.

The Baron was very human; and with the arms of the prettiest girl in Lusatia about him, and the opportune recollection that he had been expressly ordered not to betray himself, he did not resist the temptation to kiss the Princess in return. He had quite ceased to regard the adventure as disagreeable.

'But the pocket-book?' he repeated, as the Princess released him.

She found it at once.

'Here it is,' she said; 'but you don't deserve to have it, for, you know, you haven't yet told me what she says.'

'What who says?' asked Von Dalhoff.

The Princess burst out laughing.

'Surely there is only one "she" for the man who is in love, Carl. I shall tell her about this, and if Griselda doesn't at once decline to have anything more

to do with you, she will be a perfect angel of forgiveness.'

'What she says will wait,' said Von Dalhoff, who was glad to find that 'she' was the Princess of Stormarn, to whom the Emperor was engaged.

'Wait? Of course it won't wait,' declared the Princess. 'I do believe that you actually haven't read her letter yet, and that that is why you won't tell me.'

'Tut, tut!' said the Baron, as he made a bold snatch at the pocket-book, which the Princess still held; but he missed it. 'I am in a hurry, Nan,' he pleaded; 'I really am!'

'Of course; you always are! That's why you haven't read poor Griselda's letter yet. I call it cruelty.'

The Baron made another dash for the prize, and that time secured it; but he was hotly chased by the Princess as he beat a retreat, and he only escaped from her by laughingly shutting the door in her face.

In the other room he found the Emperor looking very grave.

'This has gone,' said his Majesty, as he again locked the door, 'a good deal farther than I intended. I have done the Princess an injustice. I did not foresee that she would kiss you. That must be avoided in the future. In the meantime I must ask you to give me your word never to make gossip out of what has happened.'

'Sire,' said Von Dalhoff proudly, 'I have the honour to be an officer and a gentleman.'

'If I did not think so, you would not be here,' re-

turned the Emperor. 'I have nothing, indeed, to reproach you with; you carried out your orders admirably, and you were not suspected. Now, Baron, tell me honestly and frankly, what are your wishes in life?'

'To do my duty, sire, and to serve your Majesty with all my ability.'

'Then,' said the Emperor, 'I will be frank with you. For some time I have found my duties—and especially my official duties of the more formal categories—terribly irksome. I have not, to be brief, time in which to perform them. They need the energies of more than one man. Half of them could quite well be carried out by you, not as my formal representative, but merely as one who is like me. You could efficiently appear at the window when they change the guard; you could relieve me of the burden of having to drive in the park, when I would rather be at home in my library, and so forth; and no one would be any the worse, so long as everyone was content to believe that you were I; while I should benefit by gaining proportionate leisure for study and recreation. Do you now understand my motives and my projects? Are you disposed—for here I do not command—to be my loyal, devoted and self-sacrificing assistant in the performance of some of the public duties of my position?'

Von Dalhoff was astonished.

'If, sire,' he said, 'I can be of such use to your Majesty, you may be assured that no effort and no devotion on my part shall be lacking; but I make bold to submit to your Majesty that the project is one in

which I cannot guarantee to be an always successful actor. The *rôle* is a difficult one to play, and perhaps, sire, the playing of it may not always be of advantage to your Majesty's interests.'

'All that,' said the Emperor, 'must, if only you be loyal, be my risk. I have carefully thought the matter over. On the one hand, I must have more leisure; on the other, my people must not be deprived of whatever pleasure results to them from looking upon an automaton clothed in my uniform. If you agree, it is for me to scheme and for you to carry out. When you are not posing as my double, you will be yourself, and will be at liberty to dispose of your time as you like. When you are posing as my double, I shall be the Baron von Dalhoff. To successfully carry out the scheme there must be perfect frankness and confidence between us. You will be placed in a position of responsibility, small in comparison with mine, yet perhaps greater than ever subject has been burdened with in Ruhland. At the same time you will be more useful than subject has ever been. Loyalty, secrecy, devotion, confidence, tact—these are what you must display if you would serve me well in the position which I offer you. I, for my part, will see to it that you shall be well recompensed, and that your future shall be thoroughly assured. It is for you now to decide.'

Von Dalhoff paced backwards and forwards thoughtfully for several minutes before the Emperor, who remarked:

'You hesitate, then?'

'If I hesitate, sire,' said the Baron, 'it is for your Majesty's sake, and not for mine. The questions that present themselves to me are: first, is this scheme to your Majesty's real advantage? and next, can I, if I accept your Majesty's flattering offer, give your Majesty satisfaction?'

'The first question,' declared the Emperor, 'concerns me only.'

'As regards the second,' said Von Dalhoff, 'my feeling is that in any other position it would never occur to me to distrust myself; but that, facing a career so delicate in its nature, so novel in its outlines, and so momentous in its possible bearings upon the welfare, not only of your Majesty, but also of your Majesty's house, of Ruhland, and of Lusatia in general, I tremble.'

'And I trust,' said the Emperor. 'Is it to be yes or no?'

Von Dalhoff gazed for an instant at his boots. Then he said simply:

'I place myself in your Majesty's hands, to utilize my devotion, my loyalty, and my small ability as your Majesty wills.'

The Emperor advanced, and cordially extended his hand.

'Well decided!' he exclaimed. 'Now, my dear Von Dalhoff, we enter upon new relations. We are still monarch and subject, but you become one of my most trusted friends. I shall not ask you to at once enter upon your duties. You will remain for six weeks on leave in Sandburg as my guest, living here at the palace,

but occupying your time as you like, and showing yourself in public places as much as possible. In the interim, in order to encourage in the popular mind the idea that the Emperor and Von Dalhoff are not really so very much alike after all, you will permit your beard to grow. When the beard is grown, and has become familiar, you shall one morning shave it off, and substitute for it a false beard. Thus you, by putting off the false beard, will be enabled to appear as Emperor, while I, by putting on a similar false beard, will be enabled to appear as Baron von Dalhoff. Do you understand the scheme?'

'Yes, sire.'

'And there is just one other matter. Circumstances may arise to render it absolutely imperative that one of us, while masquerading in the other character, shall be in a position to at once establish his real individuality. I purpose, therefore, that you and I shall tattoo one another. You shall tattoo on my arm, "I am the Emperor Carl"; I will tattoo on yours, "I am Wilhelm, Baron von Dalhoff." I have here lint, needles and India-ink. You shall tattoo me at once. It is quite simple. You merely prick out the lines of the letters until the blood comes, and then you rub in the ink; and it does not take long.'

'I have seen the process, sire, and understand it,' said Von Dalhoff.

'Capital! You may begin at once.' And the Emperor, taking off his coat and rolling up his left shirt-sleeve to the shoulder, sat down in a good light, and delivered his arm to the Baron's artistic skill.

'I think,' the Emperor remarked a few minutes later, 'that after what happened just now I must take the Princess Nannette into my confidence as to the arrangement that is to subsist between us. It is not fair to allow her to deceive herself. Besides, sooner or later, she would certainly suspect the truth, for she will necessarily see you almost every day; and, although you have so successfully imposed upon her for a couple of minutes, it would be a more difficult business to impose upon her for weeks, months, and years.'

Von Dalhoff heard this conclusion with mixed feelings. He was glad that there was a prospect that he would see a great deal of the Princess, for, in truth, his adventure with her had already made a deep impression upon him. On the other hand, he was half sorry that she was to be taken into the Emperor's confidence, for he could not but suspect that in that case there would be no possibility of any repetition of the delightful experiences of that day.

'May I ask, sire,' demanded the Baron, 'whether you intend to inform her Royal Highness that it was not your Majesty who just now entered the next room? Surely it is not necessary to expose her Royal Highness to that confusion, and so to expose me to her just resentment.'

'Prick deeper, my dear Von Dalhoff; you are treating me too tenderly,' said the Emperor. 'No; I think that I need not tell the Princess about that. Six weeks hence, when you are ready to enter upon your duties, she will have forgotten to-day's incident, and I shall be able to explain to her our arrangement without awakening her

suspicions. But confide in her I must, for you perceive that here in the palace, where the Princess, of course, moves about as she will, it might happen that she should one day come upon two Emperors or two Von Dalhoffs in the same room. That would arouse suspicion, even if it did not arouse alarm. I apprehend no danger from others; but the Princess is so situated that whether or not we deliberately confide the secret to her, she must infallibly know it in the course of time.'

'I am deeply grateful to you, sire, for accepting my suggestion,' said the Baron. 'You will spare the Princess pain, and me you will save from her Royal Highness's displeasure. I think, sire, the arm is now well tattooed.'

The Emperor rose, and, by the aid of a mirror, examined his arm. Then, having expressed his satisfaction, he resumed his coat, and began operations on Von Dalhoff, who had exchanged places with him. The Emperor, a man who always concentrated himself upon one thing at a time, worked without talking, and the Baron had leisure to reflect upon the future that was opening out before him.

Upon the whole he rather liked it. It promised to be adventurous and exciting; it could not fail to be interesting; it might be very useful. Above all, it was associated with the Princess Nannette, and he still felt her kiss upon his cheek, and almost blushed at the recollection. Poor Von Dalhoff! Before the day was over he began to suspect that he was in love.

CHAPTER III.

BOLTER'S GUN.

WHILE the Baron von Dalhoff was engaged in growing a beard, and in regretting that it might at any moment become his duty to show himself with a stubbly chin to the Princess Nannette, Mr. Esek Hoodlum—rich, irresponsible, and with plenty of desirable material for the editor of *Scrarpner's Magazine*—was crossing the Atlantic in a White Star liner.

Hoodlum was well known on that great highway. He was on good terms with all the captains; there were on board at least a dozen of his private friends, and half the saloon passengers had sufficient acquaintance with his books and his magazine articles to cause them involuntarily to associate him in their minds with the Lusatian Emperor.

There is on earth no race which takes quite so much interest as the free and independent American race does in the doings and sayings of the titled people of the effete Old World.

Whenever, therefore, in the smoking-room or music-room of the *Chromatic*, Esek was prevailed upon to talk

about the Emperor, he always secured a numerous and attentive audience. Esek did not usually need a great amount of persuasion ere he began, for the Emperor was a subject which lay very near the surface of his thoughts, and he was never tired of proclaiming the cleverness, energy, and self-sacrifices of his friend and hero.

No one on board appeared to be more eager to listen to these recitals than the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs.

Mr. Snaggs, who was himself a most witty and resourceful story-teller, called himself, and was called, 'the Hon.' on the strength of the fact that at some distant period of his career he had been a railroad or insurance commissioner in a Western State. He also called himself, and was called, 'Colonel.' The only reason that has ever been suggested for this is that his father, his grandfather, and all his brothers were, or had been, also called 'Colonel,' and that he thus, by inheritance and family influence, was afflicted with an unconquerable tendency to take the title. It is generally admitted that he was never in the United States army, and only his most impressive and injudicious friends assert that he ever belonged to any State militia. By profession he was a speculator and a diner-out. His speculation found a field not, for the most part, on the stock exchanges of Europe and America, but in less frequented places. He was always mixed up with a considerable number of mysterious 'good things,' concerning which the public journals appeared to know nothing, but which seldom failed to be exceedingly remunerative, if not to all engaged in them, at all events to Colonel Snaggs. He

secured concessions, he helped to make 'corners,' he formed syndicates, and he planned trusts. Yet none of his numerous money-making schemes occupied any serious portion of his time, nearly the whole of which was given up to travelling and social enjoyment.

In London, where society has scarcely learnt to discriminate between Americans and Americans, and where, in consequence, Colonel Snaggs found the *entrée* easier than he found it in Boston, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, or even in New York or Chicago, the Hon. Barnwell, in spite of his crudeness of manner and roughness of diction, was a notable lion. He was a most amusing talker, provided only that the listener was not capable of being shocked; but as Colonel Snaggs found it impossible to be amusing upon any other conditions, and as he had sufficient knowledge of the world to be aware that he must not tell his most boisterous stories, flavoured with his most startling ejaculations, in the presence of Englishmen's wives, daughters, and sisters, he was a social failure whenever a lady was near him. At dinner-parties he was dull and awkward until the men were left alone. Then only he uncorked the excessively strong wine of his rough wit, and with it kept the table in a roar until the small hours.

An American of this type receives undoubtedly more toleration at the hands of Englishmen than at the hands of people of the better classes among his own countrymen. In England he is permitted to riot in a club smoking-room or at table after dinner; in America his natural sphere is within easy distance of the bar of a big

hotel. For this reason Snaggs, save by name, was almost unknown to Hoodlum, who would have sought his society as little in Europe as in the United States. But on board ship space is limited, and there is little privacy, and Hoodlum, unless he was prepared to confine himself to his cabin and to the promenade-deck of the *Chromatic*, had, like others, to make up his mind to take his saloon and smoking-room acquaintances as he found them. The alternative admitted of very little hesitation; and, rather than be disagreeable, Esek submitted to as much of the Colonel's intimacy as he could not, without rudeness, escape from.

One evening Hoodlum had been giving some instances of the Emperor's insatiable appetite for new inventions, and of his rapid digestion of all their details.

'I believe,' he had said, 'that no man living is more quick to seize and comprehend any freshly-discovered principle or any novel demonstration, and I am sure that no one is more eager to become familiar with all useful improvements.'

On the following morning the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs was unusually silent and pensive. He did not enter the smoking-room; he omitted swallowing his ten o'clock cocktail; and, although there was a big cigar in his mouth as he walked the deck, he merely chewed one end of it and had forgotten to light the other. He appeared to be studying some abstruse and important problem. His eyes were seldom raised from the planks at his feet; and when, as occasionally happened, one of his friends attempted to join him in his promenade, or

to engage him in conversation, Snaggs turned aside, as if all intercourse with his fellow-creatures was distasteful. So absorbed, indeed, did the Colonel remain that even when the gong sounded for luncheon he paid no attention to it, and still paced backwards and forwards, as if in greater doubt and difficulty than ever.

'Not going down, Colonel?' cried an English traveller, upon whose face delight at the welcome announcement was plainly written. 'Feeling a bit squeamish, eh?'

'Oh no,' murmured the Colonel savagely. 'I don't need any of your blasted lunch!'

Yet soon afterwards the Hon. Barnwell's gloomy manner brightened. He stopped on his monotonous promenade; he stood with his hands thrust beneath his coat-tails and gazed downwards, as if at some particular spot upon the deck; he transferred his half-chewed cigar from the right to the left side of his mouth, and then, realizing that it was not lighted, flung it away; and he whistled a long, shrill note. Finally he ejaculated: 'Gosh! that will catch him every time!' and, appearing to suddenly awake to his position, his surroundings, and the fact that some hours had elapsed since breakfast, he hurried down to the saloon, where, in five minutes' time, he was telling one of his most impossible and strongly-adjectived stories.

After luncheon he lay in wait for Hoodlum on deck.

'Take one of my cigars, Mr. Hoodlum,' he said affably, as he offered his case.

Hoodlum, who had been in the act of searching for a cigar of his own, did not feel justified in refusing.

'They're just prime,' continued Snaggs. 'They cost me sixty dollars a hundred, so you've no need to hesitate about smokin' one.'

Hoodlum felt inclined to offer his benefactor half a crown, as the exact equivalent of the favour, but restrained himself.

'I have no doubt, Colonel,' he said, 'that they are excellent.'

'Fit for kings, sir—fit for emperors!'

Hoodlum laughed. 'The only Emperor whom I know,' he said simply, 'smokes cigars that do not cost him more than seven or eight dollars a hundred.'

'Well, now, that's mighty cur'ous,' commented Snaggs. 'He must be a remarkable man, that Emperor. What you were sayin' about him last night was mighty interestin', and it set me wonderin'.'

'Indeed! What did it set you wondering about, Colonel?'

'Well, it's this way,' said Snaggs: 'I guess you have heard of Major Jack Bolter's gun?'

'I'm afraid I haven't,' confessed Hoodlum. 'Who is Major Bolter, and what is his gun?'

'Do you mean to tell me, sir, that you have never heard of Jack Bolter—Major Jack Bolter, of Arkansas? Why, sir, he's one of the most remarkable men of our great country!'

'It's very stupid of me, no doubt, but I really haven't,' admitted Hoodlum.

'Well,' said the Colonel, airily waving his hand to seaward, 'that shows what a mean thing fame is. You

have heard of Bowie, of Hotchkiss, of Maxim, of Nordenfeldt, and of Colt?'

'Certainly,' assented Hoodlum.

'Well, it's all the more surprisin' that you haven't heard of Bolter, who is boss of the whole crowd. But you must have heard of Bolter's gun!'

'I positively never have! What is Bolter's gun?' asked Hoodlum.

'See here. Major Jack Bolter, of Arkansas, is a particular friend of mine, and he has invented a gun which is the most remarkable gun of modern times. It don't amount to much in the matter of weight; you can carry it in any boat, or put it on a railroad-car or on a waggon. The point about it is the shot, and the stuff in the shot. There's the subject of Major Bolter's patent. That shot carries an explosive—for bustin', you understand—ten thousand times as strong as dynamite. If you want to produce an effect equal to what would be produced by ten thousand pounds of dynamite, you just sling in one ordinary pound of Bolter's stuff and fire away. Where it strikes it busts. Never fails; ain't dangerous to handle; keeps in all climates, and don't cost much. I was wonderin' if that Emperor wouldn't just feel interested some in Jack Bolter's gun.'

'I should think that it is very likely,' replied Hoodlum. 'It must be, as you say, a very extraordinary invention, and the enormous power of the explosive is really startling. Has it been tried?'

'Only in private, so far,' said Snagge. 'But Jack Bolter is arrangin' to have an exhibition trial of it

somewhere on the Maryland coast in the matter of a month's time; and if you feel like runnin' down to have a look, why, Jack Bolter will be only too proud.'

'I shall be at Washington next month,' returned Hoodlum, 'and if your friend doesn't mind, I should like to come over immensely.'

'Right you are, sir,' said the Colonel. 'You just leave me your Washington address, and I'll see that Jack Bolter sends you an invite. Bring your friends along, too, if you like; Jack will be proud to meet them. And if, when you have seen the gun, mind, you think, same as me, that it's the most remarkable weapon of the present day, why, tell the Emperor. If, on the other hand, you don't think any great shakes of it, don't say a word. But, don't you forget it: that gun would be mighty useful and interestin' to the Emperor. It's bound to revolutionize war.'

'If I think so, I shall certainly let the Emperor know,' declared Hoodlum; 'though I don't profess to understand very much about guns and explosives, and am, I am afraid, scarcely competent to form an opinion.' And being just then anxious to assist a lady who was in difficulties with her deck-chair, he left the Colonel, who walked away apparently in great good-humour.

Hoodlum was really even more interested than Colonel Snaggs supposed by the account of the Bolter gun. He was, it is true, an American, but he had been educated and had lived much in Lusatia, and he was honoured with the Emperor's intimacy. Not unnaturally, therefore, he was only less anxious for the prosperity and welfare

of Lusatia than he was for the prosperity and welfare of his own country; and knowing, as he did, that Lusatia had powerful enemies, he saw at once that if all the claims advanced by Snaggs on behalf of Major Bolter's invention could be substantiated, it might be of extreme importance to Lusatia to secure exclusive rights in the novelty. He determined, consequently—at the cost, if necessary, of his personal convenience—to witness the trials, and, should they be successful, to report them privately and promptly to his imperial friend. Only his natural antipathy to Snaggs had prevented him from asking for full details.

Seeing that at that moment not only Bolter's gun, but Bolter himself, existed solely in the fertile brain of the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs, Hoodlum's abstention from further questionings probably saved the Colonel from a certain amount of embarrassment. There is no reason, however, to fear that Snaggs would have failed to rise to the occasion if Hoodlum had chosen to spend the rest of the day in talking about the gun and its supposed inventor, for the Colonel was a man of marvellous resource. Indeed, that very evening, in the smoking-room, as if quite unconscious of Hoodlum's presence, he let off two amusing personal recollections of the gallant Bolter, both of which were designed to illustrate the remarkable nature of that mythical individual's mental accomplishments.

So discreetly and so consistently did Snaggs play his cards, that, ere the voyage was over, Hoodlum had begun to look forward quite anxiously to the promised

trials and to the meeting with Bolter; and that he went so far, in writing to the Emperor, as to make mention of what he had in view, and to express a hope that the gun might turn out to be of practical utility in Lusatia.

At New York Hoodlum, who did not forget to leave his address, both there and at Washington, with the Colonel, drove to his house in Madison Avenue, and Snaggs, for whom some friends of his own peculiar class were waiting on the wharf, departed with them to an 'up-town' hotel, where, in accordance with his invariable practice on returning from one of his European expeditions, he gave a big dinner.

His friends were all men who were more or less connected with his various monetary schemes, and the dinner was the occasion chosen by Snaggs for the delivery to them of an informal report of his Transatlantic operations. He was able this time to inform them that he had secured from a pauper princeling a concession to erect and carry on, for a period of seven years, upon his Translucency's exiguous territory a gambling establishment; that he had organized, upon principles which could scarcely fail to assure the success of the plan, a 'corner' in genuine Eau de Cologne; and that, with some English allies, he was maturing a project for creating a 'trust,' which would have the effect of raising the retail price of particular varieties of agricultural machinery throughout Europe by, at least, fifteen per cent.

These and other announcements, combined with plenty of excellent wine and the influence of the

Colonel's unrestrained humour, raised the spirits of the company to a great height, and prepared them for listening to a proposition, the unfolding of which Snaggs reserved until a comparatively late period of the evening. Indeed, conversation had drifted far away from business matters when the Hon. Barnwell, after having hammered upon the table to obtain silence, rose and said:

'Gentlemen and fellow-citizens: before we part this evenin' I guess I've gotten an important matter to lay before you, and three important toasts for you to drink to. For the present I will leave the important matter. When I come to explain the toasts, maybe you'll understand it, but if you don't—well, I s'pose everyone here knows how to use his tongue, and can ask the necessary questions. Gentlemen, the toasts are: "The Gull," "The Bolter Gun," and "The Lusatian Emperor;" and the reason why I shall ask you to drink to them with full glasses is that, although our various little speculations look tolerable rosy and promisin', there's a considerable sight more to be gotten out of "The Gull," "The Bolter Gun," and "The Lusatian Emperor" than there is out of the whole of the rest of the caboodle. Maybe I've given the toasts in the wrong order; maybe I ought to put his Majesty first. No harm was meant. Gentlemen, if you read the papers—you know his Majesty some, I reckon. He's a young monarch, new to the business; chokefull of energy, burnin' for novelty, and dyin' to get acquainted with all kinds of fresh notions. Gentlemen, I give you "The Lusatian

Emperor." Next I give you "The Bolter Gun." The Bolter gun is the all-firedest, out-and-outest, most astonishin' weapon of this century. It is invented solely to meet the Emperor's crayin' for novelty, and consequently it is bound to be a tolerable tall kind of gun. No ord'nary gun will fill the bill. I had a notion at one time that the Bolter gun would be satisfactory if it discharged a matter of, say, a hundred thousand balls a minute, to a distance of, say, ten miles; but I saw difficulties in the way, and I wasn't sure that that kind of weapon in these days would be tall enough to catch on with the Emperor. So I fixed up in my mind a gun of a more staggerin' character. The real Bolter gun is a little thing, weighin' no more, I'll s'pose, nor an ord'nary field-piece. Into this you put a cartridge and a shot. The only cur'ous thing about the Bolter gun is that it will carry an extr'ord'nary kind of distance, and never miss; and there ain't nothing out of the common about the cartridge. But the shot is a real little marvel. It holds just one pound of Bolter's explosive—mind you, only one pound. That one pound is exactly equal to ten thousand pounds of the very best No. 1 dynamite. The explosive is safe to handle. A child can play with it, for it's just ord'nary coal-dust. But where the shot strikes it busts; and where it busts, why, geewillikins! everything's bound to go. This Bolter gun, gentlemen, is the invention of my very particular friend, Major Jack Bolter, of Arkansas. Maybe you don't know him. It would be cur'ous if you did; he ain't born yet. No more's the Bolter gun; but the gun can be born any day.

You take an ord'nary gun—any old field-piece that's been sold off a Government scrap-heap—and you fix up a grand experimental demonstration somewheres out of the way. Meantime you carefully prepare your hand. Out at sea, for instance, you have a boat anchored—a little thing that looks like a speck in the distance. On the beach, three miles away, you have a target marked out on a lump of rock; and so on. In the boat you have ten thousand pounds of No. 1 dynamite. Under the rock you have the same. And from the boat and from the rock you have wires laid down to some place where my particular friend, Major Jack Bolter, or one of his particular friends, stands watchin' the interestin' proceedin's. Well, gentlemen, you fire the Bolter gun at the boat or rock. It never misses, mind you; for just at the proper moment Major Jack Bolter takes care to press a button, and up goes ten thousand pounds of dynamite. I've told you about the Emperor and about the gun. I'm now goin' to speak to you about the "Gull," who in private life is Mr. Esek Hoodlum, of this city. Mr. Hoodlum is the particular friend of the Emperor, just as I am the particular friend of Major Bolter; only in one case the friendship is a solemn fact, and in the other it ain't so, not much. I don't want to tell you, gentlemen, that if Mr. Hoodlum happens to see the extr'ord'nary effect of that Bolter gun, he's bound to sit down at once and write word to the Emperor, and that when the Emperor gets the letter he's bound to want powerful bad to see the gun at work.'

Here the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs refreshed himself

with champagne, and smiled modestly at the applause which arose from all parts of the table.

'What I've been sayin', gentlemen,' he continued, 'is in the way of preface to what's got to come. If we haven't invented the Bolter gun, it stands to reason that, though we may exhibit it to Mr. Hoodlum, we can't sell it to the Emperor. If I know anythin' of that young man, the very first thing that he'd be dyin' to do would be to fire the gun with his own hands at his own mark; and it's a million dollars to a red cent that his own mark wouldn't happen to have ten thousand pounds of dynamite under it and a wire leadin' to Major Bolter. We can't, therefore, sell the gun. But we may do a considerable bigger deal than that. Has it ever occurred to any of you to figure up the market value of a young and popular Emperor?'

He paused, and gazed around him with such an air as may have been assumed by Columbus, when he was at length able to demonstrate to his followers that he had not been pursuing a mere phantom.

'Has it ever,' repeated Snaggs, 'occurred to any of you gentlemen to figure up the market value of the Lusatian Emperor? The question is, "What would the Lusatians be prepared to plank down for him if to-morrow we had him and they hadn't?" Well, I've figured things up, and I calculate that from their point of view he'd be dirt cheap at twenty-five million dollars. The people over there think a powerful deal of him; the family's rich, and all over Europe he has rich relations, who'd be glad enough to pool some of their savin's in

order to ransom him. Now, see here! I don't propose violent measures. What I propose is this. We exhibit the Bolter gun to Mr. Hoodlum. In due course the Emperor will be dyin' to see it, too. We will be dyin' to please him. We will buy or rent a fast ship—such a steamer as the *Chromatic*—and we will fix her up with half a dozen Bolter guns, and take a pleasure trip in her to Europe. Lyin' somewheres off one of the ports of Lusatia, we will send word that if the Emperor will be so obligin' as to have some targets set out for us to blaze at, we will be particularly delighted to smash them up, and to have his Majesty on board to see the fun, and to fire the guns, s'posin' he feels that way. Well, he'll come, I guess. And then the steamer will just skip; and the Emperor will enjoy the breezes with us, as our guest, until his relations and subjects make it convenient to plank down twenty-five millions. I've fixed up all the plans. The ship will be full of coal, and she will go south, where she can't be followed. When we have had a good time and have gotten the dollars, all we will have to do is to go ashore somewheres quietly, change our names, and settle down like ord'nary citizens. Maybe we'll persuade the Emperor not to be ugly afterwards. But, whether or no, there are plenty of places about the world where a man can live safely and comfortably for a year or two until his little jokes have been forgotten. The plan's sound enough, and easy enough. Didn't they kidnap the Prince of Bulgaria a few years ago? Why, it's like shuckin' peas. The only thing that I'm afraid of is that somebody else will think of

kidnappin' him before we can get hold of him. Gentlemen, I give you "The Lusatian Emperor, the Bolter Gun, and the Gull."'

Everyone rose, and there was a storm of applause. But it was not until the toasts had been laughingly honoured, and general conversation had been resumed, that any of those present began to discover, from the Colonel's manner, that he had been speaking seriously. When it fully appeared that this was the case, the project met with almost general ridicule.

'Why, Colonel,' objected one critic, 'you would have the whole Lusatian navy after you.'

'No warship yet built,' replied Snaggs, 'could catch a steamer like the *Chromatic*, which, moreover, could be made to carry coal sufficient to take her twice round the world. No, sir; I have thought of that point.'

'You would have an international combination against you, and all ports closed to you,' said a second man.

'Let them combine and let them close: I don't care. Tell you what it is, gentlemen. I've fixed up all the plans for this deal, and I'm going through with it. I guess you can stand in, or you can stand out. It don't matter to me. But you ought to know that when Barnwell Snaggs takes hold of a big thing, he's apt to stick to it until he has gotten all he wants out of it.'

In truth, Snaggs's determination and persistency were not less proverbial among his allies than his extraordinary good luck; and before the party separated, the Colonel, although he had made but one or two actual converts, was able to see that, in the course of a few

days, all the rest of his guests would join him. He would not, it is scarcely necessary to say, have exposed his projects to them had he not from the first been pretty sure of his men; and in this, as in many other bold strokes upon which he had previously risked much, his remarkable knowledge of human nature, and especially of its weaknesses, served him well. A week sufficed him for talking over the last of those who had first jeered and then hesitated. A second week sufficed him for capturing a few additional recruits. And by the end of the third week a little knot of about fifty New Yorkers were formally associated with him in the prosecution of the plan which he had sketched out at the dinner. Some were active partners in the venture, and purposed to accompany Snaggs to Europe and to assist in the kidnapping of the Emperor, and in the subsequent cruise. Others were sleeping partners, and contented themselves with subscribing more or less secretly to the funds upon condition of receiving a proportionate share of the proceeds. But nearly all were men belonging to a single class—a class which, in New York, is proportionately larger than in any other big city in the world, and which may be described as the class of the dishonest well-to-do. Poverty is not the direct instigator of their crimes. They wear diamond studs in the glare of noon; they drink champagne all day; they drive fine horses; they live in gaudy houses. But poverty indirectly inspires them, for they are most of them 'self-made' men, who have sprung from the poorest and lowest ranks, and who, in their childhood, have existed

in an atmosphere where the worst vices are regarded with toleration, and where the blackness of a crime is gauged simply by the unskilfulness or ill-success of its perpetrator. The number of men of this character who are to be found among the ward politicians, the saloon and smaller hotel-keepers, the sporting and gambling fraternity, and the petty speculators of the empire city is larger than anyone only superficially acquainted with the by-ways of New York life could possibly suspect. Snaggs, though he was with them, was not of them. He used these people for his own purposes, and they willingly recognised in him an able leader; but he probably despised them fully as much as Hoodlum despised him.

As for Hoodlum, his paths in New York did not run parallel with those of Colonel Snaggs and his associates. He heard nothing more of the Bolter gun until he moved on to Washington, where one day, rather to his surprise, he received a nicely-printed invitation from 'The Bolter Gun and Explosives Company' to be present on a specified morning at a little coast village near Cape Charles, Maryland, and to witness the promised demonstration.

He went, he saw, and he was conquered.

What he saw was a boat moored so far out at sea that only with the aid of a glass could he distinguish that it was a boat, and a nine-pounder field gun, which, by means of the addition to it and to its carriage of a few cog-wheels and a good deal of bright brass-work, had been made to look like a very elaborately designed piece of

THE BOLTER GUN EXPERIMENT.

machinery. He was shown a cylindrical projectile, into which a carefully-weighed pound of coal-dust was poured by an imposing personage, who had been introduced to him as Major Jack Bolter. He was bidden to notice that ordinary powder was used as a charge for the gun, which was duly loaded before his face. The weapon was laid and sighted while he looked on. He heard it fired, for, to be exact, he shut his eyes when he knew that Major Bolter was about to pull the lanyard; and finally, looking seaward, he saw the distant boat disappear in a burst of smoke and flame and a huge upheaval of water. Then to his ears came the thud of the far-off explosion. Afterwards a similar projectile was fired against a built-up cairn of large stones, placed on the beach, at least two miles from the muzzle of the gun; and the cairn also vanished. He walked down to where the cairn had stood, and found a gaping crater. As a concluding experiment, one ounce by weight of coal-dust was placed upon an iron anvil, which had been partially imbedded in the sand. A fuse was attached and lighted, and the party hastily retreated. After the explosion the anvil was discovered to be shattered into several fragments, all of which had been hurled to a distance of many yards from their original position.

Hoodlum felt that he need ask to see no more. He congratulated Snaggs; he complimented the ingenious Bolter; and he joined in the wonderment expressed by a number of individuals whose names he did not know, but who, he was quietly given to understand, were special representatives of various European Govern-

ments, each one of which was more than half inclined to purchase a share of the company's property, if only the company would consent, as it would not, to concede a right to manufacture.

'No, sir,' said Snaggs; 'either we continue to be sole manufacturers, or we dispose of our entire and exclusive rights all round. Those are our terms for the Bolter gun.'

Hoodlum went back to Washington full of what he had seen; and that very night he wrote enthusiastically upon the subject to the Emperor, who, in course of post, replied, much less enthusiastically, that he should be very glad of an opportunity of judging for himself of the capabilities of the gun, and that he had no objection if Hoodlum chose to say as much to the company.

Hoodlum did say as much; and, in return, he was informed that the company, anxious to display the powers of the weapon under the best possible conditions, intended to charter a steamship, to mount on her deck several different patterns of the Bolter gun, and to take her to Europe, prepared to exhibit her enormously-destructive capacities, especially against floating targets of all kinds, in the presence of crowned heads, naval and military officials, and other competent judges.

Hoodlum was delighted. He felt that he was at length in a fair way to benefit his Lusatian friends.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW AIDE-DE-CAMP.

The growing of Von Dalhoff's beard caused much temporary excitement throughout Lusatia.

The cause of the excitement was as follows. It has been shown that the Emperor had invited the Baron to live in the palace during the growing of the beard. His Majesty, as a matter of course, had also put a court carriage at the Baron's disposal. One evening, at sunset, Von Dalhoff, who wanted to get up an appetite for dinner, took a drive in the park in the western suburbs of Sandburg. At that time the evolution of the beard had progressed as far as the ragged tooth-brush stage, and although the growth was long enough to render the young captain's appearance very unkempt and untidy, it was not long enough to conceal his striking resemblance to the Emperor. The latter had an old-standing habit of once or twice a week, when he could spare the time, driving in the park at sunset, usually in the company of the Princess Nannette, but sometimes alone. Von Dalhoff wore the usual military overcoat and cap, and, as he was in one of the imperial

carriages, it is not astonishing that, in the failing light, he was by very many pedestrians mistaken for the Emperor. Next morning nearly all the Sandburg newspapers announced in large type that his Majesty was growing a beard. The reason, according to some, was that the doctors had recommended the sovereign to protect his throat. According to others, the innovation signified that his Majesty wished to pay a compliment to his navy, the officers of which wore beards much more generally than the officers of the army. The matter was next noticed and commented on by the entire press of Lusatia; it became the subject of leading articles in the foreign newspapers, many of which, with marvellous sagacity, connected the supposed growth with the condition of European politics; and, finally, half the illustrated journals throughout the world published at the week's end more or less fanciful portraits of the newly-barbed Emperor. Some gave him a flowing beard, reaching to his chest; others allowed him only a thin 'goatee' of the American pattern; others decorated him with a French-looking 'imperial;' and yet others granted him nothing better than a hideous 'frill,' which, straggling up from beneath his collar, framed a cleanly-shaven face, and made the picture look like that of some noted burglar. The excitement lasted for nearly a week; it induced romantic Lusatian young ladies to forward anonymous protests to the palace; and it was with difficulty quelled by the publication in the official *Reichszeitung* of an unqualified contradiction, and by the appearance at a grand review of the Emperor, beard-

less and wearing his familiar moustache. Even then many people believed that the growth of the beard had been allowed to begin, and had only been stopped in deference to popular clamour; and this, no doubt, is still the conviction of some.

It was this affair which hastened Von Dalhoff's formal introduction to the Princess Nannette. At breakfast one morning the Princess saw the statements in the papers, and naturally called her brother's attention to them.

'They have mistaken my new aide-de-camp and confidential secretary for me,' said the Emperor.

'What!' exclaimed the Princess, who had been accustomed only to imperial aides-de-camp of mature age. 'Who is the favoured general?'

'The favoured general,' laughed the Emperor, 'is a captain—the Baron von Dalhoff. I have selected him on account of this very resemblance to me, in hopes that on unimportant occasions he may be able to represent me, and so to save me a little unnecessary fatigue and waste of time.'

'Oh, Carl! Surely you are not going to enter upon such a dangerous course. What will the people think if they ever discover that you have been imposing upon them? Why didn't you consult me before coming to this extraordinary decision?'

'The simple fact is,' said the Emperor, 'that unless I can relieve myself of some of my most formal and mechanical duties, I shall soon be unable to perform those which are of the first importance; for the work of my position is too much for one man. I admit that

there are disadvantages, and possibly even perils, connected with my scheme; but the work of the country must be done. If I had brothers or uncles, or near male relatives, to assist me, I might utilize their services without risk of offending my people; but, you see, I have no one of the kind, and so I have chosen to avail myself of the Baron von Dalhoff, who is a young officer of the very highest character and merit, and of whose complete devotion I am well assured.'

'But why have you not thought of utilizing me?' demanded the Princess. 'Surely I could do a great deal.'

'I do not think,' replied the Emperor, 'that a woman ought to be called upon for public work of this kind. A Princess of Ruhland has duties which are connected with society, with charity, with the arts, with female education, and so on; and these are sufficient for her strength. Is it not a fact, Nan, that you, too, have already quite enough to do?'

'Oh, I am not idle!' laughed the Princess. 'But really, Carl, I am in grave doubt as to whether you are acting wisely. I wish most heartily that you had not taken this step. Of course, you have informed Count Stark?'

'Yes, I told him two days ago; and it would be folly to conceal that he is almost as much opposed to the plan as you seem to be. Yet it is my conviction that it is the only plan which will permit me to be in the highest degree useful to my country. I need scarcely say that it is not my intention that the secret shall be confided

to another living soul. You, Stark, the Baron, and myself are, and must remain, the sole depositaries.'

'That, of course, is for the present necessary, if you are determined to persist, though Griselda must also be told when you are married.'

'Certainly; that was understood.'

The Princess Nannette was silent for a minute, and when she walked round the table and kissed her brother she only said:

'I think, Carl, that you are the most headstrong boy in the whole world. Heaven grant that this step may not cause all of us trouble!'

'Never fear,' said the Emperor cheerily. 'It is all for the best, little one.'

The Princess looked at him strangely.

'When did you call me that before?' she asked. 'Only once, I know, because I remember how tender your voice seemed, and how much I liked the words.'

'Was it when you wouldn't surrender that red pocket-book of mine?' suggested the Emperor, who did not altogether forgive himself for what had occurred on that occasion.

'Oh yes! of course. And now, Carl, you must introduce this Von Dalhoff to me, since I am in the secret. It won't do for me also to be mistaking him for you.'

'We'll have him in, then,' assented the Emperor, as he rang a bell; and in a few minutes the Baron, having been sent for, entered.

'My dear Von Dalhoff, I want to introduce you to my sister, the Princess Nannette,' said his Majesty. 'My

sister is in the secret of our future arrangements; and as these will necessarily bring you sometimes into contact with her, it is well that you should make her acquaintance.'

The Baron bowed and turned scarlet; but happily the Princess did not notice his confusion.

'The Emperor and I,' she said, 'were talking about these absurd newspaper reports. It appears that you were mistaken last night for his Majesty.'

'I seem to have had the honour,' ventured the poor captain; 'but, seeing my present untidy condition—in which, nevertheless, his Majesty orders me to enter your Royal Highness's presence—it is, I think, somewhat astonishing.'

'There is a resemblance, certainly,' said the Princess, frankly regarding the unhappy Baron, 'and a very striking one. Yet, though it may deceive persons who only occasionally catch sight of the Emperor, I think that it would never for an instant deceive me.'

The Emperor laughed aloud.

'Don't be too sure, Nan,' he exclaimed.

'Oh, I can see all kinds of little differences!' she declared.

'But recollect how differently dressed we are,' said the Emperor, 'and how much change the Baron's unshaven chin must make in his appearance. Will you recognise me, I wonder, when I appear as the Baron von Dalhoff; for that, too, is part of our plan. You see, as the Herr Baron I shall be able to get leisure and relaxation which, as myself, I should never be able to hope

for; so, when Herr von Dalhoff has once grown his beard, he will shave it off, and he and I will, so to speak, divide it thenceforth between us. When he is himself, he will wear a beard similar to his natural one, but false; when I am he, I shall wear a false beard similar to his natural one; and then I really think, Nan, that we shall be practically indistinguishable by ordinary people, if not by you. But,' he added laughingly, 'in case of serious doubt, a court of final appeal is provided. We have our proper names tattooed on our left shoulders; so there is no danger of our being really mixed up.'

The more the Princess heard of the scheme, the more she distrusted it; but, as she would not allow this to appear too plainly to Von Dalhoff, she contented herself with saying:

'Well, I sincerely hope, Herr Baron, that the project will turn out well. You have a difficult and responsible task before you.'

When he had withdrawn, she asked her brother:

'Don't you think, Carl, that his slightly nervous manner may betray him?'

'I don't think so,' returned the Emperor; 'for I never saw him in the least degree nervous before. That must be owing to the beard, or to you, or to both combined. He will do well enough, I believe. At least, I am convinced that I could not, for this purpose, have stumbled upon a more trustworthy and capable helper; and I feel confident, my dear Nan, that he will not falsify my high opinion of him.'

From that day the Princess cultivated Von Dalhoff's

acquaintance. Her anxiety as to the wisdom of her brother's plans, and her great affection for him, prompted her to endeavour, if only as a protective measure, to secure the friendship and personal devotion of a man who, she felt, was about to have entrusted to him immense possibilities of good and evil. It did not occur to her that Von Dalhoff would ever think of abusing his position, for she was familiar with the traditional loyalty of Lusatian officers; but it did occur to her that circumstances might arise that would require all Von Dalhoff's loyalty, as well as all his ability, to successfully cope with them, and she justly realized that it could not but strengthen him, and tighten his attachment to the Imperial family and its interests, if she granted him as much as possible of her confidence. It therefore delighted her to find that Von Dalhoff liked her society.

And, indeed, what man would not have liked it, even if he had not been, as the Baron was, incurably in love with the Pearl of Ruhland? She sought Von Dalhoff only for her brother's sake; Von Dalhoff sought her only for her own. He, who would have been happy enough to be permitted to stand on guard by night and by day outside her apartments; he, who would have been glad to let her walk upon his prostrate body; he, who would have deemed himself honoured by an occasional sight of her, or by an occasional recognition by her of his existence, was admitted daily to almost an equal's intimacy with the woman whom he worshipped. It mattered little to him that it was his duty to treat her, and that he always did treat her, not as a girl, but as

a Royal Princess; in his heart she was none the less his 'little one.' And thus she had no difficulty whatever in securing over him an even greater influence than she had hoped for. Yet never for an instant did she suspect the reason. She imagined that his devotion to her depended chiefly, if not solely, upon the fact that she was the Emperor's sister. He knew that every day his devotion to the Emperor was becoming deepened by the consideration that the Emperor was the Princess's brother.

The six weeks passed for him, therefore, too quickly. At the expiration of the period the commencement of his new duties led to his being frequently absent from the Palace, and to his seeing less than before of the Princess.

His principal work was the making of sudden appearances, and the doing of other unexpected things which involved little or no speaking on his part, and no formal assertion of his supposed individuality; but even in these modest functions he encountered from time to time a few mishaps. Both the Emperor and the Princess schooled him to the best of their abilities, but they could not remember and foresee everything; and occasionally it happened that Von Dalhoff failed to know the name of, or even to recognise, some high official who, in his own mind, had long cherished the conviction that the Emperor regarded him with peculiar favour. Such occurrences as these were very awkward and confusing, and they led, no doubt, to many petty jealousies and heart-burnings; but Von Dalhoff was diplomatic enough to

always seize an early opportunity of setting things as right as possible again with a gracious glance or a tactful word, and very little permanent harm was eventually done. In a short time, moreover, he began to be familiar with the faces, names, and titles of most of those whom it fell to his province to meet; and thus, although, at first, rumours got abroad to the effect that the Emperor's memory was failing, these soon passed off, and gave way to wonderful stories of the Emperor's insatiable activity, his almost inexplicable ubiquity, and his unparalleled devotion to even the smallest interests of the great country over which he reigned.

There were other mishaps, of course, but nearly all really important ones were obviated owing to the simple and admirable arrangements which were made by the Emperor. His private apartments, consisting of bed and dressing-rooms, study and smoking-room, occupied one side of a long corridor, upon the other side of which were two rooms belonging to Von Dalhoff. At the end of the corridor was a passage-room through which the two suites communicated, and of which the door leading into the corridor had been built up. It was the Emperor's rule that in all cases the assumption of a new identity should take place in that passage-room when both parties were present. This rule rendered it impossible for there ever to be two Emperors or two Von Dalhoffs abroad at the same time. Coming in in his proper character, and desiring to change his identity, the Emperor would enter his own apartments, and, by means of an electric bell, summon the Baron. The two would then go into the

passage-room, where the Emperor would change his coat and assume a beard, while Von Dalhoff would change his coat and lay his beard aside. If, as Von Dalhoff, the Emperor came in, he would enter Von Dalhoff's apartments, and go thence to the passage-room, which, it is almost needless to add, was kept locked, and of which keys were in the possession only of the Emperor and of the Baron. In this room was an automatic printing telegraph-instrument, through which, from any part of the country, either the Emperor or the Baron could wire to the palace in case of his being unavoidably detained by accident or otherwise. There was kept there also a large slate upon which each, before going out, made a point of writing down his probable whereabouts during the interval between his departure and his intended return. And there was another slate upon which, when Von Dalhoff was not at hand, the Emperor set down any orders which he might desire the other to carry out. The passage-room, or telegraph-room, as it was called, of course required occasional cleaning and turning upside down; but when this was necessary, anything that might cause suspicion was removed from it by Von Dalhoff to his own rooms; the door on that side was locked, and the servants entered through the Emperor's apartments, and, by the management of the Princess, began their work at a convenient moment, and speedily finished it.

So wonderfully perfect were all the arrangements that it would have been quite possible for the Emperor, sitting in his smoking-room (which was next to the

telegraph-room), say with some private friend, to go for an instant into the telegraph-room and to send out Von Dalhoff to take his place and continue the conversation without exciting in the mind of the friend the slightest suspicion of the change. That, of course, could not have been safely done at first, and would at all times have been dependent upon Von Dalhoff's being ready within hearing; but, presupposing so much, it could have been easily done after the system had settled down into working order. So far, indeed, as ordinary eyes and ears could have detected, there was absolutely no difference between the true Emperor and his substitute. The Princess Nannette alone could distinguish them at a glance, but this was only because she had discovered for herself that on his right cheek the Baron had an almost imperceptible mole, while the Emperor had nothing of the kind.

By Midsummer Day the new scheme, in smooth working order, was answering admirably. It gave the Emperor time for study and reasonable amusement; it delighted Von Dalhoff, if only because it allowed him to be near the Princess; and it pleased the people, for, although Von Dalhoff never appeared when the Emperor's presence had been specifically promised, and although he never, at any of his public appearances, said a word which only the Emperor could have rightfully uttered, everyone mistook him for the Emperor. He stood at the well-known window of the palace when the guard was changed and received the cheers of the multitude, while the Emperor was in his library; and he

drove or rode in the park and returned the salutes of the crowd, while the Emperor was playing billiards with Admiral Spott; so that everyone concerned was satisfied.

Thus the summer passed, September came, and, as the time of the combined manœuvres drew near, Hoodlum was again back in Europe, and was often at the Palace, always full of the Bolter gun, and of the wonderfully-armed ship that was presently to be sent over by the Bolter Gun Company to astonish the world in general and the Emperor in particular. Hoodlum brought with him a programme which had been drawn up by Snaggs for submission to the Emperor's approval. This specified that the vessel would arrive off the Lusatian port of Friedenhaven at the time when, on account of the manœuvres, his Majesty would be in the immediate neighbourhood; and that if by October 8 the Emperor would order targets to be laid out at sea in the vicinity of the port, and would then, or on the following day, be so gracious as to proceed on board the steamship *Philistia*, which had been specially engaged for the purpose by the company, he would have full opportunity of witnessing a complete demonstration of the extraordinary powers of the new invention, concerning which Mr. Hoodlum was already in a position to give general information.

The Emperor agreed to the proposals, and named October 9 as the day on which it would be convenient to him to watch the experiments. Hoodlum, therefore, cabled to this effect to the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs, who,

in his turn, made his plans and preparations accordingly.

The Company was fortunate in being able to secure the *Philistia* for its project, for very few other vessels afloat would have served equally well. Built in England for the Cunard Company, she was one of the fastest and most powerful twin-screw steamers in the world; but, owing to some miscalculation in the making of her designs, she was found, when built, to draw much more water than had been intended; and, as there is a bar at Liverpool and another at New York across which vessels of excessive draught can only pass at the time of very high tides, this fault was held by her owners to disqualify her for the general Atlantic passenger traffic. As soon as they had discovered the error they had caused another ship to be laid down, and had decided to sell the *Philistia* upon terms as advantageous as possible; but bidders had not been numerous, and, consequently, when the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs and his friends came forward and offered £250,000 for her as she lay in her berth at New York, the Cunard Company, though losing by the transaction, determined to part with the great white elephant.

She was of magnificent proportions and most luxuriously fitted; but, more important than anything else connected with her—her speed of twenty-two knots only excepted—was the fact that, when not obliged to stow cargo, she would carry no less than 4,500 tons of coal. This, it was computed, was enough to take her nearly twice round the world at the economical speed of eleven

knots, or thereabouts; and as, in addition, she was rigged, though lightly, as a four-masted schooner, she was not entirely dependent even upon her unexampled steaming capacity.

She was in the magnificent order that is characteristic of Cunarders, and she needed only coal, stores, officers and a crew. All these were, without much difficulty, provided, and, with a good margin of time at her disposal, the *Philistia*, a week after Hoodlum's cablegram had been received, took advantage of a spring tide to leave New York.

Snaggs and about twenty of his associates were on board, and, for the sake of appearances, they took with them four old guns, cheaply fitted and disguised after the fashion of the gun which had been used for Hoodlum's deception at Cape Charles. But they did not venture to mount these while the *Philistia* was still at New York, and it was generally imagined on shore that they had purchased the ship mainly as a speculation, and that they intended to dispose of her at a profit either to one of the European mail steamship companies, or to some Government which would adapt her for service as a cruiser or a transport. Not, indeed, until the vessel had left America did the New York papers, which even then had only rumours of the vaguest kind to build upon, announce that, though the *Philistia* had gone to Europe to be ultimately sold, she had also gone thither to exhibit before the Lusatian Emperor some mysterious weapon of war, of which great things were expected; for Snaggs had felt that, in view of the rather bold act

which he was about to attempt, he did not require unnecessary publicity; and Hoodlum, in his anxiety to see Lusatia the sole owner of the marvellous Bolter gun, had said nothing whatever about it and the *Philistia's* mission, except to the Emperor.

The combined manœuvres, in which the 19th and 20th Army Corps and a squadron of the Lusatian navy were to take part near the mouth of the Gulf of Friedenhaven, were to be carried on from the 1st to the 9th of October inclusive. On the last day of September the Emperor was to leave Sandburg, and on October 10th he was to return thither, and there remain until the 19th, when he was to proceed to Stormarn for his wedding on the 20th. Seeing that during the manœuvres the various functions at which the presence of the imperial uniform would be expected would be of an interesting as well as of an important character, the Emperor informed Von Dalhoff that from September 30th until October 10th his services could be dispensed with, and that he would be at liberty, should he desire it, to leave Sandburg; but that, punctually at noon on the 10th, he must await his master in the telegraph-room, and that, from that time until the 19th, his duties would, in all probability, be somewhat more onerous than usual, owing to the Emperor's desire to attend to and settle a number of private affairs previous to departing for Stormarn.

As the Princess Nannette was going to remain in Sandburg, Von Dalhoff determined not to avail himself of his leave of absence, but to remain there, too. Had

the Princess not remained, he would probably have gone, as a private spectator, to the manœuvres; and, if he had done this, it is tolerably certain that the recent history of Lusatia, and perhaps of Europe, would have been very different from what it has been.

Von Dalhoff ventured to cherish no definite plans whatever in connection with the Princess. He knew that, according to all the conventions of the Lusatian Court, she was too far above him for him to dare to hope. He found, when it once occurred to him to look up the question, one example, and one only, of a princess allied to the sovereign having married a private individual, and in that case the princess was the great-aunt by marriage, and not the sister, of an emperor, so that the instance did not appear to him to be very encouraging. Yet for the present he did not want to make definite plans. He was young; the Princess was free, and he daily had the delight of her society. He had, moreover, known her only a few months; and, upon the whole, he was content to enjoy the meed of good fortune that had already fallen to him and to wait. Without any risk he could, for the time, be near her, hear her voice, watch the play of her face, feast his eyes on her as she sat unconscious of his gaze, feel sometimes the touch of her hand, and anticipate her wishes. If he admitted further ambitions, he might cause his castle to collapse around him. Even she might well resent his presumption if he dared to hint of an aspiration to a position higher than the one he occupied in the Princess's favour. As for the Emperor, he would naturally be furious.

Such, briefly, was the state of Von Dalhoff's feelings when the Emperor departed for Friedenhaven, in the ugly but comfortable castle of which his Majesty took up his headquarters.

In Lusatia manœuvres mean very hard work for all concerned, from the Emperor downwards, but especially for the Emperor, who on these occasions generally mounts his horse every morning at an hour beyond which an English menial servant would expect to be allowed to remain in bed. The actual work in the field is often ended by a little after noon; but later there are State visits, receptions, gala dinners, concerts, torch-light serenades, tattoos, processions of veterans, fireworks, and much more, and the official day is regarded as a blessedly short one if it extend over no more than seventeen hours out of the twenty-four. How Field-Marshal Count Stark, who accompanied the Emperor and went everywhere and saw everything, managed to withstand the effects of the perpetual motion and the long hours is inexplicable, or explicable only upon the assumption that a life's struggle against them had resulted in relieving him from all human weaknesses; for the tension and rush sorely tried many a younger man, and majors and colonels, who had not half as much as he to do, thanked Heaven when the hurry was over, whereas the Count, ruddy and cheerful as ever, was undisguisedly sorry.

But the long days, though tiring, passed quickly. On October 8 the operations culminated in a grand attack by one army corps, supported by the fleet, upon the

other army corps, occupying intrenched positions on a rocky peninsula near the mouth of the Gulf. Towards noon the defenders executed a well-conceived counter-attack upon the left of the rapidly closing-in enemy on the land side, and so cut their way out, and by three o'clock the 'cease fire' sounded, and the manœuvres proper were over.

In the meantime a number of targets for the Bolter gun experiments had been laid out in the offing in accordance with the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs's wishes, and that afternoon the Emperor was informed that the *Philistia* had arrived at the mouth of the Gulf, and was awaiting his Majesty's visit on the morrow.

Hoodlum, who had been the guest of the Emperor during the whole of the manœuvres, about which he had not omitted to write a long article for *Scrarpner's Magazine*, was further invited to see the *Philistia* experiments. Herein he was much favoured, for not many others received invitations. Count Stark, Admiral Spott, and not more than half a dozen officers besides them, constituted, in fact, with the Emperor and Hoodlum, the selected party which on the morning of the 9th went on board the imperial yacht *Adler*, off Friedenhaven, and was taken down the Gulf, the Lusatian fleet following in imposing order.

The *Philistia* was soon sighted, but she lay a long way out. When within a mile of her the Emperor signalled for the fleet to anchor, and, anchoring his yacht also, he and those with him descended into the *Adler's* magnificent steam-launch, in which, with the imperial ensign waving

gaily above his head, he was conveyed alongside the ex-Cunarder.

Miles away to seaward the great wooden targets, formed of huge baulks of timber, which had been provided for destruction by the Bolter gun, stood up on the horizon.

'I hope that your favourite weapon will come well out of the ordeal,' said the Emperor to Hoodlum, who sat next to him in the stern-sheets of the launch; 'but those are big targets to be annihilated by a single pound of any explosive whatever.'

'I feel confident that you will not be disappointed, sir,' replied Hoodlum.

'Well, we shall see. But here we are. What a big ship she is, to be sure! She looks very fast, too.' And the Emperor, seizing the lines that were held out to him by the men at the bottom of the *Philistia's* gangway ladder, jumped out of the launch, and, followed by his suite, mounted the steps, at the top of which stood the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs and a score of his New York friends.

At the gangway the Emperor remained saluting until the Americans, feeling that they ought in some way to respond, took off their hats, and crowded forward in a mob to shake hands with their imperial visitor.

'Proud to meet you, Emperor,' said Snaggs, whom Hoodlum, having squeezed past, hastily and rather shamefacedly introduced to his Majesty. 'What do you propose to do with that boat of yours?'

'Do with the boat?' repeated the Emperor good naturedly. 'Why, the boat will wait to take us back again, of course.'

'But we can't fire from here, Emperor; not much. I want to show you how we can knock sparks out of these targets of yours while we are under steam.'

'Very well,' said the Emperor; 'let the launch have a line passed to her, and let her be told to hang on astern.'

'You'd best come along to the saloon and take a smile, Emperor,' said Snaggs, 'while we are getting under way.'

'I'm much obliged,' said the Emperor, who felt that he must put his foot down; 'but if "smile" be American, as I believe it is, for drink, I would rather not. I am pressed for time, and shall be glad to see the experiments at once.'

'Why, certainly, Emperor,' assented Snaggs, as he moved away, and left the imperial party standing alone.

CHAPTER V.

KIDNAPPED.

THE *Philistia's* anchor was quickly weighed, and long before it was catted the great steamship was slowly moving away from the *Adler* and the Lusatian fleet, and heading to seawards.

Snaggs's party was all on the bridge; the Emperor's was on the promenade-deck below it. The Americans whispered together mysteriously; the Lusatians marvelled in silence at the cavalier manner in which the Emperor was being treated, and at the good-humour with which he had borne with Snaggs's familiarities. The Emperor, with the Field-Marshal, strolled apart.

'Surely,' said the former, as he patted the breech of one of the ancient weapons with which the vessel had been fitted, 'this cannot be the famous Bolter gun?'

'That looks, sire,' replied the Field-Marshal, 'like an old American nine-pounder field-piece on a naval carriage of still older date; but I do not understand the meaning or object of all this brass-work, these cog-wheels, and these winches and rackets.'

'Where's Hoodlum?' asked the Emperor. 'He has seen the Bolter gun, and he can tell us.'

Count Stark beckoned to Hoodlum, who, as he approached, said ingenuously:

'That's the wonderful gun, sir.'

The Emperor looked with a curious expression at the Field-Marshal, and the Field-Marshal looked with an equally curious expression at the Emperor, who, turning to Hoodlum, demanded:

'But are you not mistaken? This is merely an old field-gun, and not even a rifled one. Did you not tell me that the Bolter gun struck and sank a boat at a distance of four miles and a half, or thereabouts?'

'I saw it do so; and I believe that the gun which I saw fired is the very one which you are now looking at,' returned Hoodlum, who was a little hurt at the idea that his word was doubted.

'Well,' said the Emperor, 'we shall see; but if this gun can throw a projectile one-third of the distance it will astonish me very much. Now, where are we going, I wonder?'

The ship was nearing the line of targets, as if to pass through it, and was rapidly increasing speed.

'I confess, sire, I do not understand the business at all,' answered Count Stark. 'They can't be intending to fire from seaward. If they do they will have to fire more or less in the direction of your Majesty's ships.'

'Oblige me, my dear Hoodlum,' said the Emperor, 'by asking your friend Mr. Snaggs to let me know his

programme, and not, on any account, to fire towards the fleet.'

Hoodlum winced at being thus associated with the Colonel, but he walked to the foot of the ladder leading to the bridge, and waited there until he caught Snaggs's eye.

'The Emperor would like to know what you are going to do,' he said. 'He particularly desires that you will not think of firing in the direction of the fleet.'

Snaggs whispered to one of his friends, who immediately ran down the ladder.

'If you'll come right along to my cabin,' said the man, 'I'll give you the hull programme.'

Hoodlum followed his fellow-countryman along the deck, down some steps to the upper-deck, and thence down more steps to the main-deck, where he was, as he thought, rather unceremoniously pushed into an empty cabin, and, with the utterance, 'I shan't be more nor a minute,' was left to himself. As, at the expiration of about five minutes, the man had not returned, Hoodlum tried the door, and found, to his consternation, that he could not open it.

In the meantime the Emperor became impatient. The line of targets had been passed, and, as Hoodlum did not reappear, Admiral Spott was ordered to ask Snaggs for information. The Admiral was treated exactly as Hoodlum had been treated, except that he was not shut up in the same cabin; and, ere he realized that he was a prisoner, affairs on deck reached a crisis; for the Emperor, finding himself beneath the bridge, and happening to catch Snaggs's eye, asked:

'When are we going to begin, Mr. Snaggs?'

Instead of answering at once, the Colonel turned to whisper hastily to some of his friends, and then said bluntly:

'We don't propose to begin at all, Emperor. We propose to take you on a little trip with us. The Bolter gun is a fraud; and we propose to hold you and your party until you are ransomed. That's about the size of it.'

The Emperor's eyes blazed, and he put his right hand to the pommel of his sword, but withdrew it again, and rejoined the Field-Marshal.

'Count,' he said, 'we have been deceived. We are prisoners.'

The old soldier opened his eyes very widely and almost gasped.

'Your Majesty is pleased to joke!' he exclaimed.

'I do not joke, Count. On the contrary, I am very serious. I have just been informed by this person who is called Snaggs that he and his friends intend to keep us until we are ransomed.'

The Field-Marshal made a forward movement, and not only seized his sword, but half drew it. The clatter of the blade as, at a sign from the Emperor, he dropped it back into the sheath, attracted the attention of the rest of the Lusatians, all of whom approached.

'Violence is of no use,' said the Emperor calmly. 'Gentlemen, we are overpowered. See—each one of those men upon the bridge has a revolver in his hand. Other armed men are stationed aft, to prevent us from

communicating with the launch which is towing astern. If resistance were of the slightest use, I should lead you. As it is, I will not permit bloodshed. Gentlemen, we are prisoners. By whom we have been betrayed I know not. I hope it is not significant that Mr. Hoodlum's absence is to be remarked.'

The Lusatian officers looked at one another as if thunderstruck. The daring of the deed was at first above their comprehension. The kidnapping by a band of rough Americans of an Emperor—of *the* Emperor—was incredible. What could it all mean?

Snaggs, who had been anxiously watching the group below him, deemed that it was time for him to speak.

'Well,' he shouted from the bridge, addressing the Lusatians in general and none of them in particular, 'I guess you have concluded to surrender. If you have, you're mighty wise, for resistance ain't no use, you bet. Every man of us is armed, and knows how to shoot, and emperors and field-marshals are just as easy to hit as any other kind of human bein's. But we don't want to make trouble. Here you are, and here we propose that you shall remain until you are ransomed. The figure is a big one, naturally. We intend to have twenty-five million dollars, or, if you like, five million pounds, or a hundred million marks, or a hundred and twenty-five million francs—in gold, mind you,—for what we have caught—no more and no less. The price covers the hull party. In the meantime, there won't be no cause for complaint. You'll all be well treated, and if you don't enjoy a pleasant trip in the *Philistia*, why, it won't be

KIDNAPPED!

the fault of me and my friends. You can talk it over a bit, and see what you think of it. When you've made up your minds to be reasonable, I'll be pleased to tell you where and how the ransom is to be paid. This afternoon I propose to send that steam launch ashore with someone to negotiate; and, as we don't wish to cause unnecessary inconveniences, why, any of you gentlemen may send what letters you please to your friends.'

Having listened, with repressed indignation, to this harangue, the Emperor, without deigning to reply, drew Count Stark aside.

'Count, this is serious,' he said. 'They mean what they say, and they have the power to perform it. Even if we could signal to the ships, they could not catch us, for this steamer is three or four knots faster than any of them. We must submit. Go to them, I beg you, and tell them that, while I completely reserve to myself my freedom of action and decline absolutely to give any undertaking whatever, I realize that we are all for the present in their power. Say that I desire to know the conditions of ransom, and that I wish to send letters ashore as soon as possible. And, my dear Count, forgive me for having unwittingly led you into this unfortunate business. I regret it, I assure you, as much for your sake as for mine.'

'Your Majesty need not say that,' returned the Field-Marshal, in whose eyes tears trembled. 'I know your Majesty's great kindness of heart. But the misfortune is all yours; and it is my good fortune to be where I

most desire to be, at your Majesty's side. I trust that I may be able to retain my temper when I speak to the authors of this unheard-of outrage.'

'If you doubt yourself, my dear Count,' said the Emperor, 'I will myself speak to them.'

'Your Majesty's dignity has been already sufficiently insulted,' said the old man, as he turned and went to the foot of the bridge-ladder.

Snaggs, carrying a revolver in his left hand, descended to meet him.

'Well,' he asked, 'they have concluded to surrender, General, I guess?'

'I have the honour to be Field-Marshal Leonhard, Count Stark, in the service of his Imperial Majesty,' said the gallant old soldier, 'and I am commanded to see the leader of these—these pirates.'

'Call us what you please, Field-Marshal,' said Snaggs airily. 'I am the boss, or, if you like it better, the leader; and my name is Snaggs, Colonel Barnwell Snaggs.'

The Field-Marshal bowed, ignorant, of course, that Snaggs's colonelcy was a fable.

'His Majesty,' he said, 'reserves his complete freedom of action, and declines to give any undertaking, but, realizing that he and his suite are, for the present, in your power, wishes to be informed as to the terms of the ransom, and desires to send letters on shore as soon as possible.'

Snaggs pulled out a cigar, and bit off the end of it.

'Well,' he said, 'as for freedom of action, the

Emperor and you gentlemen will have the run of the ship. You can't want more. There are nice cabins ready for you, and there are a French cook and a London tailor on board.'

'But the Emperor will not promise not to escape,' said the Count.

'I guess we'll promise that for him.'

'Nor does his Majesty undertake to surrender his full right, by force or otherwise, to seize the ship, and to hand over you and your accomplices to justice,' added the old soldier.

'Don't he? Well, he'd best give up any idea of that sort at once. We don't want to be hard on him, or you; but unless all you gentlemen give your word that you won't cause trouble, I shall have to ask you to give up your swords,' declared the Hon. Barnwell.

'Sir!' ejaculated the Field-Marshal icily.

'I don't care which way it is,' said Snaggs; 'but I must have your promises or your swords.'

'I will report to his Majesty what you say. You will, perhaps, tell me where the ransom of one hundred millions of marks, if ever it be paid, is to be placed in your hands?'

Snaggs drew a folded paper from his pocket and handed it to the Field-Marshal.

'This tells you all about that; and I guess, for the sake of all parties, it's best to have it quite clear and straightforward, so I've had it printed. There are full directions, with a chart of the place; and you can have as many copies as you like to send ashore to your

Government. The boat will leave the ship at three o'clock this afternoon. It will take for you what letters you please. I don't want to interfere with private affairs. Write to your wives and sweethearts just as you feel like writin'. I shan't ask to see. Only you had best remember that you may not have another chance for months.'

'One thing more,' demanded the Field-Marshal. 'Where are Admiral Spott and Mr. Hopdlum?'

'I guess they're locked up,' replied Snaggs; 'but they're none the worse, and if we come to a reasonable arrangement 'bout the swords, I'll have the gentlemen let out right away.'

The Count turned on his heel and rejoined the Emperor.

'They want our swords, your Majesty, or a promise that we will not endeavour to seize the ship.'

'We will give neither,' said the Emperor. 'To give the swords would be in some sort to recognise in these scoundrels our legitimate and honourable vanquishers; to give our promise would be to hamper our freedom of action. That we must preserve to the full. Let the officers give me their swords. In that they will experience no humiliation. I will, if necessary, throw them overboard. And as to the ransom?'

'The particulars are here, sire,' replied the Count, as he gave the paper to the Emperor.

'And letters?'

'The boat is to go with them at three o'clock, and they are not to be examined.'

'Thank heaven for that!' ejaculated the Emperor.

'And I should add, sire,' said the Count, 'that upon the settlement of the question of the swords, Admiral Spott and Mr. Hoodlum, who are confined below, will be liberated.'

'Ah! then the sooner the swords go overboard, the better. As for Mr. Hoodlum, have you heard anything? Is he, too, the victim of our captors, or is he their confederate?'

'I have heard nothing, sire,' replied the Field-Marshal.

The Emperor mused for a moment.

'Well,' he said at last, 'there is much to be done between this and three o'clock; I will therefore receive the swords of my officers at once, and then go below to write.'

'Gentlemen,' cried the Count to the Lusatians, 'his Majesty asks for your swords. In order of your seniority you will deliver them to him;' and, setting the example, he took off his own sword, and with a profound bow presented it.

The Emperor accepted it without a word, and, having laid it on a seat beside him, similarly received the swords of the rest of the suite. Then, unbuckling the sword which he himself wore, he placed it on the top of the heap, and, tying the weapons together by means of their knots and cords, flung the whole into the sea.

'That's a pity, now, Emperor,' sang out Snaggs from the bridge. 'But take it your own way. It don't matter a cent to us whether you give them up or throw

them overboard. I'll have your friends sent on deck sharp.'

The Emperor indignantly turned his back.

'Let us go below, Count,' he said; 'time presses. Gentlemen, write what letters you will. I am informed that the boat will take them ashore at three o'clock. And let the release of Admiral Spott and Mr. Hoodlum be reported to me.'

Seeing the Emperor and the Count about to leave the deck, Snaggs sent after them a man who, in a perfectly inoffensive way, offered to conduct them to the cabins which had been prepared for them. These proved to be very spacious and well-furnished. To the Emperor was assigned the music-room, which had been partitioned off so as to form two cabins, and which, being on the upper deck, was airy and unconfined. For the Field-Marshal was set apart a cabin, very much smaller, of course, yet of good size, which had been built as a family cabin, and which adjoined the music-room. On a table in the Emperor's outer cabin were two or three boxes of good cigars, a spirit-stand, a stand containing a number of bottles of mineral water and glasses, a large pile of new books, and all the latest American magazines. Another table, fitted as a writing-table, stood below a large scuttle, which admitted plenty of light. On the walls were hung good pictures and several maps. In a capacious book-case were all the usual current works of reference, and everywhere it was apparent that neither pains nor expense had been spared to render the place comfortable. The forethought of the captors was still

more noticeable in the inner or sleeping cabin, where the Emperor discovered an American-Lusatian servant hard at work packing away in various drawers an immense quantity of new linen, gloves, ties, and other things, which had been specially brought for the Emperor's use. The poor servant, who before his migration to New York had served his time in the Lusatian army, and who, when engaged for the voyage, had been kept in ignorance concerning the person upon whom he was to attend, had heard only half an hour previously that he was to be the Emperor's valet, and, at the same time, that the Emperor was a prisoner on board, and when the Emperor suddenly came upon him was in the most painful state of perturbation. He remembered, however, to draw himself up and to salute, and the military precision of his action striking the Emperor, caused the latter to ask:

'You were in the army?'

The words were too much for the terrified fellow, who, falling on one knee, burst into tears.

'Majesty, I am not one of them! Majesty, I have no hand in this wickedness! Majesty, I am only a poor servant!' he exclaimed.

The Emperor, of course, recognised at once that the man was a Lusatian.

'If you have done nothing shameful or dishonourable,' he said, 'rise. Your present masters are not the men whom a good Lusatian would choose to serve; but that you are in no way to blame for their crimes is only what I suspect. If you are to be my servant, so much the

better; have no fear. But do not cry like a girl; I wish to write.'

The man hurried into the outer cabin, prepared pens, ink, and paper, and, when the Field-Marshal entered, saluted him as smartly as he had saluted the Emperor, who, in the meantime, had opened the printed paper which had been given to him, and had read it. What his Majesty read was as follows:

'*Terms for the Ransom of His Imperial and Royal Majesty the Lusatian Emperor.*'

'The Emperor and suite, being on board the steamship *Philistia*, are detained there pending compliance by the Lusatian Government or by others with the conditions hereinafter laid down.

'The sum fixed by way of ransom for the party is $25,000,000 in United States gold currency; but as regards the whole or any part of this, foreign gold coinage at the rate of £1 English, 20 marks Lusatian, 25 francs French or Belgian, 25 lire Italian, 24 guilders Dutch, or 21½ florins Austrian, will be deemed equivalent to $5, and will be received accordingly.

'As the entire weight of gold demanded by way of ransom aggregates nearly forty tons, it is required that the gold coins of whatever denomination be packed in strong boxes, each containing $125,000, or their equivalents, as per the scale above quoted. There will thus be two hundred such boxes, each weighing, exclusive of the package, rather more than four hundredweight. The

boxes must be iron-bound and substantial, and furnished with iron handles.

'The treasure thus packed must be conveyed at the charge of the Lusatian Government, and at as early a date as possible, to the Island of Sala-y-Gomez (lat. 26° 27′ 46″ S., long. 105° 50′ 1″ W.), in the South Pacific, and there deposited in a hollow, which will be found at a distance of about fifty yards to the north-west of the highest point, and which cannot be mistaken.

'The treasure must then be left unwatched and unguarded, until such time as those entitled to receive it may visit the island.

'It is pointed out that to avoid the possibility of the treasure being removed from the island by unauthorized persons, great secrecy should be observed as to the place of its deposit. As Sala-y-Gomez is out of the usual track of ships, and as it is uninhabited and barren, there is little danger, if these precautions be taken, of the treasure passing into the hands of others than those for whom it is designed.

'It is also pointed out that the presence in the neighbourhood of Sala-y-Gomez of any vessels may have the effect of delaying the embarkation of the treasure on board the *Philistia*, or on board any other ship which may be despatched for the purpose, and that, therefore, no attempt should be made to entrap those who will go ashore to convey away the boxes. Any attempt of this kind might be followed by retaliatory measures against the persons of the hostages. As it is sincerely desired to avoid unnecessary unpleasantness, and to encourage the

Lusatian Government to act in good faith, it is added that the great speed of the *Philistia*, combined with the amount of coal which she carries, precludes the possibility of her capture by any vessel afloat, and renders pursuit of her worse than useless.

'Upon the treasure having been taken from the island, examined, weighed, and found to be correct, his Imperial and Royal Majesty and suite will be immediately conveyed to the neighbourhood of one of the great commercial ports and there landed. They will be provided with money and all necessaries, and will thus be placed in a position to reach Lusatia with all speed and with suitable comfort.

'During their unavoidable detention until ransomed they will be treated with the utmost consideration and respect, and all possible arrangements will be made for their convenience. Only the adoption by the Lusatian Government or its emissaries of a course of bad faith, or the neglect by the said Government to place upon the Island of Sala-y-Gomez the stipulated ransom within a period of seven calendar months from the date of the Emperor's enforced departure from Friedenhaven, will bring about any alteration in the mode of treatment of the hostages. In the case either of bad faith or of neglect, the captors reserve to themselves full right to act as circumstances may seem to indicate. They wish in the meanwhile that it may be clearly understood that upon the full and honourable compliance of the Lusatian Government with the conditions herein laid down, the Emperor's safe return to Lusatia must entirely depend.

Any breach of conditions may immediately bring about the most lamentable and irremediable of all results; and for their own protection the captors will never hesitate, should need arise, to proceed to extremities.'

* * * * *

The Emperor handed the paper to Count Stark.

'There,' he said, 'is the modest demand of these people for one hundred millions of marks. So far as I can influence matters, not one pfennig will be paid to the scoundrels;' and he sat down to write. His first letter was to Von Dalhoff.

'My dear Von Dalhoff (he wrote),

'A circumstance which will probably strike you as almost incredible causes me to congratulate myself to-day upon the existence of an arrangement which may enable you to save my country from grievous trials. The Count and half a dozen officers, whose names will be sent you as an enclosure, left Friedenhaven with me this morning in the *Adler*, to go on board the *Philistia* to witness the promised experiments with the Bolter gun. Scarcely were we on board the *Philistia* ere she got under way, and we were curtly informed that we were prisoners, and that we should not be liberated except upon payment of a hundred million marks. The particulars of this outrageous demand you will find in the accompanying printed paper. As I have said, the story must appear incredible to you. It is, nevertheless, an uncomfortable and dangerous fact—uncomfortable for me and mine, and dangerous for the empire and for

the peace of Europe. Abroad I have enemies who, if they knew that I am in my present position, would not scruple to take advantage of the fact in order to deal a blow at Lusatia, which, they would conclude, could not be otherwise than partially demoralized by the sudden abduction of its sovereign and leader in war. It is therefore of the first importance that my disappearance shall be concealed. You have my full authority to take whatever steps may be necessary to this end. Nay, I distinctly enjoin you to do so, for I am persuaded that by no other methods can the immediate outbreak of European war be averted. I send you my rings and a few other personal belongings, which will greatly assist you in the performance of the duties which I now thrust upon your shoulders. My dear sister, the Princess, will also, I well know, loyally and truly help you and me. To her I am writing my wishes. Consult her in all things, but in all things recollect that I confide in you. You are my sole representative, and have power, by my will, to give orders, to personate me, and to simulate and use my signature in such manner as will best further my aims and the welfare of my country. When I return it will not be difficult to justify ourselves, and to obtain for you an indemnity; and it shall be my care that you, at least, do not suffer. But if I do not return within a year, or if, in the meanwhile, you obtain reasonable evidence that I am dead, your duty will be to call a council of ministers, to show them this letter, and to take their advice. Until then, or until I return, I charge you upon no consideration to permit it to be supposed

that you are not I, or that the Emperor is not at his post. The trust is great. I know, my dear Von Dalhoff, that you are not unworthy of it.

'To only one person who does not already know it must the secret of our arrangement be entrusted. Her Highness the Princess Griselda, my promised wife, is entitled to be told, and must be told, the truth. I am asking my sister, the Princess Nannette, to tell it her, of course with all precautions, and I am enclosing to my sister a letter to the Princess Griselda herself, to be delivered when the communication shall have been made, as may be decided.

'Do not for one moment entertain the idea of paying a ransom of any kind whatever to our captors. Only the Count, the Admiral, and the officers whose names accompany this, must be supposed to have been carried off. It may be suggested, if you like, that the scoundrels aimed at you, but missed you. That is for you to determine. If we are rescued it must be in the only dignified way—by the power of Lusatia, and not by its gold. Send, therefore, a strong force of ships to the neighbourhood of Sala-y-Gomez, and harass the *Philistia* until she be taken or destroyed. I scarcely doubt that foreign governments will gladly co-operate in the work. Even if we all have to be sacrificed do not consent to pay one pfennig by way of ransom. I am not an article of merchandise. Remember this.

'And now, my good Von Dalhoff, as there is much that I must write to others, and as I confide implicitly in your loyalty, ability and courage, I hamper you with

no further orders. I only add, since it may assist you in pursuit of us, that Mr. Hoodlum is on board. His connection with our captors I cannot discover, for I have not yet had any interview with him since we were detained. But I am bound to tell you that I can scarcely resist the conclusion that he is an accomplice. I advise you, therefore, should he be caught, to regard him with suspicion, unless he can give the fullest and most convincing explanations. At the same time, I pray that I may be doing him an injustice, for, as you know, he and I are old friends. Keep a good heart, my dear Von Dalhoff. Do for me and for mine, in face of this outrage, what you can; and, when we meet again, believe me, there shall be nothing which, asking, you may not obtain from your attached friend and sovereign,

'CARL, I. R.'

Just as the Emperor had finished writing and was in the act of ringing the bell at his side, one of his officers entered to say that Admiral Spott and Mr. Hoodlum had been liberated, and that the Admiral requested permission to deliver up his sword. The Admiral was in waiting outside the cabin door, and, being commanded to come in, gave up his weapon, which the Emperor at once carried to the ship's side and threw overboard.

'*Resurget*, my dear Admiral,' he said. 'In the meantime it is better there than in the hands of the unworthy. Be so good as to cause to be made out for me a list of the officers who are with us, that I may send it ashore

with my despatches, and, please, desire the Field-Marshal to come to my cabin.'

It has already been mentioned that, except the Princess Nannette, the Field-Marshal alone enjoyed the Emperor's confidence on the subject of the arrangements with Von Dalhoff. When, therefore, the old soldier appeared, the Emperor handed to him the letter to Von Dalhoff, and, while the Count was reading it, began a letter to the Princess Nannette.

'Well, do you approve, my dear Stark?' the Emperor asked, after a few minutes had elapsed.

'Sire, certain things that are permissible and indeed desirable and necessary in war must not be gauged by peace standards. I pray that your Majesty's plan may find in Von Dalhoff a genius capable of carrying it out. As for your Majesty's refusal to entertain the idea of ransom, I am delighted. Your Majesty cannot treat with criminals and thieves. But I venture to fear, sire, that you will be put to grave inconvenience.'

The Emperor smiled for the first time since he had learnt of his detention.

'What I regret most, Count, is that I cannot order you to go home at once. Who takes our letters ashore?'

'From conversation which I have overheard, sire, I gather that Mr. Hoodlum is to go.'

The Emperor whistled slightly, and, stooping at his desk, added to his letter to Von Dalhoff: 'If this be brought you by Mr. Hoodlum, you may create a most beneficial effect by seizing an early opportunity of showing yourself to him in a new character. But I recom-

mend you to get rid of him from the country. He may be, and I hope is, my friend, yet, for the present, it is the safest course.' And, having finished the brief post-script, his Majesty made some of his rings and trinkets into a neat little parcel, which, with the letter and the list of the officers' names, he wrapped up in several thicknesses of paper, sealed, and addressed to Von Dalhoff. He then completed his letter to the Princess Nannette, wrote one, to be enclosed with it, to the Princess Griselda, and, with the despatches in his hand, went out on deck in order to discover, if he could, the whereabouts of the *Philistia*. So well did he know the coast that he had little difficulty in satisfying himself that the ship was off the little island of Möen, near the southern entrance to the Sound of Elsinore. She was heading o the northward and steaming at full speed.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. HOODLUM IS SURPRISED.

Mr. Esek Hoodlum was in a very unenviable frame of mind. He realized that but for him the Emperor would not have been kidnapped, and, though he had the satisfaction of knowing that throughout he had acted in perfect good faith and with the best intentions, he could not but be aware that the turn of events must cause him to be regarded by his Lusatian friends in general, and by the Emperor in particular, with serious suspicion. Furious, therefore, at having been made the instrument whereby Snaggs's traitorous schemes had been fashioned and made practicable, he no sooner learnt, after his liberation from duress, particulars of the project of the conspirators than he went to settle matters with the Hon. Barnwell.

Snaggs had temporarily left the bridge and was in his cabin. There Hoodlum found him, discussing the situation with two of his friends and partners.

'Guess we don't want you in here, Mr. Hoodlum,' said the Colonel, rising as the American entered.

'You'd best look spry and get ready for going ashore, for the boat will leave at three.'

'You don't want me!' repeated Hoodlum; 'I dare say not!' And, without another word, he launched himself bodily through the air at the Colonel, and, striking him in the face with both fists simultaneously, felled him to the deck.

Snaggs's friends at once seized the wrathful Esek, who, having vented his indignation, offered very little resistance.

'I am happier now,' he exclaimed, 'for I hope I have marked that scoundrel for many a day to come.'

Snaggs, who had fallen heavily, knocking his head against the corner of a table, did not move, but lay breathing stertorously with his face covered with blood.

One of the men called for assistance, and, in a very few minutes, Hoodlum, this time in irons, was again locked in the empty cabin, and the ship's doctor, having examined Snaggs, pronounced him to be stunned and to have acquired a broken nose and a badly-contused eye, but to be otherwise not seriously hurt.

The American who at Cape Charles had figured as Major Bolter, and whose real name was Agamemnon Rawlins, was Snaggs's principal lieutenant, and, during the temporary disablement of his chief, assumed the conduct of affairs. Conscious that Snaggs, upon his recovery, would be anxious to take summary vengeance upon his assailant, and desirous to avoid, if possible, the perpetration of violent acts, Mr. Rawlins, when he had heard the doctor's report, went on deck in order to

hasten the departure of the boat. As he did so he almost stumbled against the Emperor.

'Beg pardon, your Majesty,' he said easily and inoffensively, 'but if your despatches are ready I should like the boat to leave the ship as soon as possible in order to prevent trouble. One of your friends, you see, has assaulted Colonel Snaggs. It was natural enough, I dare say, but Snaggs will be mad when he comes round, and, if your friend is in the ship, the Colonel 'll be wanting to shoot him.'

'Who has assaulted Colonel Snaggs?' demanded the Emperor.

'Your Majesty's American friend, Mr. Hoodlum,' replied Rawlins.

The Emperor was greatly relieved.

'Mr. Hoodlum and Colonel Snaggs are not on good terms, then?' he asked.

'Well, your Majesty, I put it to you whether it is quite likely. Snaggs is carrying you off. Mr. Hoodlum was led into indoocing you to come on board. Naturally he feels kinder hurt, and so he let his feelings git the better of his judgment, and went for Snaggs.'

'By all means let the boat go ashore, then,' assented the Emperor. 'But where is Mr. Hoodlum?'

'Well, we've had to put him in irons, your Majesty; but I've no objection to letting him out if he'll be quiet.'

'If you will tell him that I wish to speak to him here, and will send him up, I will undertake that he shall be quiet.'

'Why, cert'nly, your Majesty,' returned Rawlins; 'I'll tell him so, and I'll get the boat away at once.'

Hoodlum soon came on deck, looking extremely unhappy; but he was somewhat reassured when the Emperor approached him and offered his hand.

'You mustn't champion my cause in this violent way, my dear Hoodlum. Remember, you are to act as our postman to the shore, and for that office we need someone whom we can trust,' the Emperor said kindly.

'I was exasperated, sir, at the position in which I have quite unwillingly placed you and placed myself,' returned Hoodlum. 'I felt that you could scarcely help regarding me with grave suspicion. I assure you, upon my honour, that I have been as much deceived as you, and that if I be to blame, it is solely for having been too zealous in attending to what I believed to be your interests.'

'Don't let that trouble you,' said the Emperor. 'After what I have heard, I cannot attribute to you any fault worse than the fault of having been imposed upon, and in that I am myself a sharer. You are now going ashore——'

'I would much rather remain.'

'It is best that you should go. I have here some letters which I should not like to be obliged to entrust to strange hands. One is to my secretary and aide-de-camp, the Baron von Dalhoff. I want you to see him and deliver it in person. The other is to the Princess Nannette. When you find yourself ashore, I beg you to spare neither pains nor expense in getting as quickly

as possible to Sandburg. It is of importance that my abduction should not be publicly known any sooner than may be inevitable. Tell the facts to Von Dalhoff and to the Princess, but to the people in the boat and to all others suggest, if you can, that, having altered my plans, I purpose to land at Gottenborg, Christiania, or where you will. You may be sure,' he added, with a smile, 'that I shall if I can. Or be reticent, and say nothing at all to chance questioners. It is all important to gain time; even a few hours may be valuable. So I confide in you to do your best for me.'

'I am sure, sir, that after the stupid exhibition I have made of myself, and after the trouble and anxiety which I am unwittingly causing, it is very generous of you to confide in me at all; but I will do my best.'

'I wish to confess to you, Hoodlum,' continued the Emperor, 'that in my mind I at first almost did you the injustice of believing that you were in league with these people; but the suspicion is entirely removed.'

'I thank you, sir, with all my heart. Be sure that I shall make what amends I can for my credulity and folly.'

'And one thing more,' added the Emperor. 'Do not take it unkindly. I think that, when you have delivered our letters, you will consult my interests, as well as your own, by leaving Lusatia. I don't want you to be identified in the popular mind with to-day's work; and there are other reasons. Some day, if things go well, I shall ask you to come and see me again. In the meantime, we shall not forget our old friendship. Now,

I hear them ordering the engines to be stopped. I have just another note to write; please do not go without it. I shall be in my cabin.'

The Emperor's final note took the shape merely of a line to Von Dalhoff exonerating Hoodlum, but adding that, as Hoodlum's presence in Sandburg might complicate the inevitable difficulties of the course which Von Dalhoff had been directed to pursue, Hoodlum, at the Emperor's wish, would take an early opportunity of leaving Lusatia.

The Emperor was about to take this note on deck, when he was met at his cabin-door by Rawlins.

'Beg pardon, your Majesty,' said the man, 'but I must respectfully ask you not to go on deck until the boat has pushed off. The officer and men in her might be suspicious if they saw your Majesty and suite under any kind of constraint; so I have taken the liberty of putting two sentinels outside to enforce orders.'

The Emperor fumed.

'Then ask Mr. Hoodlum to come to me,' he said shortly.

Hoodlum entered almost immediately, and found the Emperor rapidly pacing the cabin.

'They have shut me up until you shall have gone, Hoodlum,' the latter explained; 'so I must ask you to pacify the officer and men in the launch. If they knew what has occurred, they would, I am persuaded, try to take the steamer; and the result would be inevitably fatal to every one of them, and might, moreover, prevent us for the present from communicating with the shore

even by other means. Therefore tell the officer in the boat that I desire him to land you at the nearest point, and then, obtaining coal and water, if necessary, to return to Friedenhaven. Stay, I will write him an order;' and the Emperor hastily scribbled a dozen words on a sheet of paper. 'Now,' he added, as he gave the paper to Hoodlum, 'good-bye, and may you get quickly to Sandburg!'

The Emperor held out his hand, which his friend grasped with some emotion ere he turned quickly away and left the cabin.

It was a parting which hurt the Emperor deeply, for with Hoodlum Lusatia seemed to withdraw into the unattainable distance. Thenceforward, for weeks, for months, perhaps for ever, there would be no communication between the sovereign and the land which he loved. He would not know how it fared, or whether his plans, hastily devised in hope of saving it from the worst evils, were prospering, or were all in vain. If evils happened, he would not be in his proper place, aiding and inspiring his countrymen to triumph over them. And with Lusatia there went from him his sister and his promised wife. More than once during the five minutes after Hoodlum had left him the Emperor barely restrained an impulse to rush out at all hazards, and to leap from the deck into the sea, trusting that the launch might pick him up and get away with him ere it could be caught or sunk; but, happily, he did restrain it, for the attempt, if made, could only have ended in disaster.

In less than ten minutes the sentries were removed, and the Emperor went on deck, where, with his suite around him, he watched the launch, which, no longer bearing the gay imperial ensign, steamed fast into Faxe Bay, bound for the little town of Stubberup, where there is a railway-station.

While the *Philistia* ploughed her way through the Sound and Kattegat, and rounded the Scaw into the Skager Rak and the North Sea, Hoodlum, anxious only to deliver his despatches at the earliest possible moment, did a remarkable piece of travelling to Sandburg; and, since affairs at the Lusatian capital demand attention ere the fortunes of the steamship need be further followed, he may, for convenience, be accompanied on his journey.

It was twenty minutes after three in the afternoon when he landed at Stubberup. By a quarter to four he had started on a special engine for Kiöge, which he reached at a quarter past five. At Kiöge, whither he had telegraphed in advance, he obtained a special train which deposited him at Roskilde at twenty minutes to six. There he dined, and, taking the ordinary train, reached Korsœr at thirty-five minutes past nine, and the ordinary steamers and train landed him at Fredericia at seven minutes to two in the morning. There a special train, ordered by wire, awaited him, and, making Altona at a quarter past seven, he got into Sandburg as the clocks were striking eleven.

At Altona he succeeded in procuring a morning paper, and as soon as he had it he turned with feverish haste

to the column in which the Sandburg court intelligence was printed. What he read there greatly relieved him.

'Yesterday morning early,' it ran, 'his Imperial and Royal Majesty the Emperor, accompanied by his Excellency the Field-Marshal Count Stark, Admiral Spott, and a small suite, embarked on board the yacht *Adler* off Friedenhaven, and, proceeding down the Bay, escorted by the fleet which has been taking part in the manœuvres, visited the American steamer *Philistia* in order to witness some experiments with the new guns which have been mounted in her. It was understood that the experiments would take place near the mouth of the Bay, but, contrary to general expectation, the *Philistia*, having weighed anchor, took the Imperial launch in tow, and, steaming to seaward, was in an hour lost to sight. It is anticipated that his Majesty desired to witness experiments upon a somewhat more extensive scale than could be easily conducted in the comparatively narrow waters in which the fleet is lying, and that he may even wish to see firing by night. Up to a late hour the *Philistia* had not returned to port. The weather is beautiful. It is feared that his Majesty, in consequence of this alteration in his arrangements, may not return to Sandburg to-day at the hour originally fixed.'

'I should think that there is every probability that he will not,' thought Hoodlum gloomily.

Lower down he read three telegrams. One, dated from Stubberup, announced that 'The steam launch of his Lusatian Majesty's Imperial yacht *Adler* put in here

this afternoon to land a courier with despatches, and to obtain coal and water. An hour later she steamed away from Friedenhaven.' A second, from Friedenhaven, said: 'The steam launch in which his Majesty and suite went on board the *Philistia* this morning returned after dark to the *Adler*. She reports that she took ashore at Stubberup Mr. Hoodlum, the American who has been his Majesty's guest during the manœuvres, and who was entrusted with despatches, and that his Majesty purposed to prolong his voyage to Gottenborg, or perhaps to Christiania, before returning. To his Majesty's well-known love of the sea, and to his natural desire for rest and change after the fatigues of the past fortnight, this alteration in the Imperial plans must be attributed.' The third telegram, dated from the Scaw at midnight, was very brief, and announced that 'a large steamer, supposed to be the *Philistia*, passed here at half-past eleven, bound west.'

The last telegram was the only one which was at all likely to excite suspicion and alarm; for, had the *Philistia* been bound for Gottenborg, she would not have been sighted from the Scaw at all, and, had she been bound for Christiania, she would have been steaming north instead of west. 'But, perhaps,' thought Hoodlum, 'people will not notice that fact.'

They did notice it, however; for when Hoodlum, before jumping into a cab at Sandburg, in order to be driven to the Palace, consulted the second edition of one of the metropolitan morning papers, he found a large-type paragraph which was ominously headed,

'Apprehensions concerning the Emperor's Safety,' and which was worded as follows:

'We have already announced that yesterday morning the Emperor proceeded on board the American steamer *Philistia;* that the steamer, contrary to expectation, at once put to sea; that she sent a boat ashore yesterday afternoon at Stubberup; that the boat subsequently returned to Friedenhaven and reported the Emperor's supposed decision to go as far as Gottenborg or Christiania; and that late last night the *Philistia* passed the Scaw going to the westward. This last piece of intelligence induced us early this morning to make inquiries by telegraph both at Gottenborg and at Christiania, whence we are now informed that the *Philistia* has not called there, and that nothing whatever is known of her. While we are exceedingly unwilling to entertain any feelings of uneasiness as to the safety of our beloved sovereign, we cannot avoid the conclusion that absence of definite news of his Majesty's movements must, should it be prolonged for many hours, excite alarm of the most terrible kind. It is, of course, possible that his Majesty may have landed at one of the smaller ports on the Danish or Swedish coasts, and may be even now returning to his capital; but we need scarcely point out that it is in the highest degree improbable that the Emperor can have landed anywhere without being recognised, and that, if he had been recognised, a report of his landing ought ere this to have been received. We may add that his Majesty has promised to be present this evening at the first performance of the new opera

"Ariovistus" at the Royal Opera House. Should the Emperor happily return in the course of the day, his loyal subjects in Sandburg will not, therefore, lack an early opportunity of publicly welcoming him. We trust, in the meantime, that as soon as any news of his Majesty is received the authorities will calm all possible misapprehensions by communicating the facts to the press.'

Hoodlum was in some perturbation when he reached the Palace. He was anxious to be the first bearer of intelligence as to what had happened; for he realized that it might be of great importance that the Government should know the facts before the newspapers could get hold of them, and he feared that, after all, he had arrived too late.

Von Dalhoff and the Princess were also uneasy. They had, of course, seen the reports in the morning journals. The Princess steadfastly refused to believe that any harm could have happened to her brother, and was sanguine enough to express her confidence that he would still be back by noon; yet her restlessness, and her scarcely-repressed agitation at any unwonted noise outside or movement inside the Palace, betrayed the fact that, although she maintained a hopeful exterior, she was vaguely apprehensive. As for Von Dalhoff, although, for the sake of the Princess, he endeavoured to conceal his forebodings, he knew enough of the methodical and business-like habits of his sovereign to feel quite certain that the Emperor would not have willingly altered his arrangements merely in order to enjoy the pleasure and relaxation of a sea-trip in the *Philistia*; and he was

uncomfortably confident that the arrival of the despatches which were said to have been sent ashore at Stubberup would reveal that something wholly unexpected had occurred. He had not, however, the remotest inkling as to what that mysterious something might be.

The Princess and Von Dalhoff were together in the Emperor's private study, searching the papers and discussing all the possibilities of the situation, when Hoodlum's cab drove at a rapid pace into the courtyard.

The Princess ran at once to the window, as she had run at least a dozen times that morning.

'Oh, it is Mr. Hoodlum, Baron!' she cried excitedly. 'He must have been the courier who was sent ashore. Now we shall know.'

'I am going to take a friend's privilege,' said Von Dalhoff gently: 'I am going to hear the news first. If it be good news, I shall have the pleasure of imparting it to you. If it be not good, I may spare you a shock; for Mr. Hoodlum is blunt and straightforward. But the news, of course, is good. I only wish to be on the safe side.'

The Princess looked at Von Dalhoff.

'You are afraid that something bad has happened, she said.

'I am afraid of nothing,' he returned, forcing a smile, 'but Mr. Hoodlum's possible want of tact. He will come up flurried and hot from his journey, and before he has had time to explain, your Royal Highness will be for five minutes on tenter-hooks. I beg you to let me see him.'

'But you will conceal nothing? Promise me that.'

'I will conceal nothing. There will be nothing to conceal. I will meet Mr. Hoodlum in his Majesty's smoking-room. If you will remain here, I will return to your Royal Highness the instant I know the facts.'

At that moment a servant entered to say that Hoodlum desired to see Von Dalhoff at once on important business.

'Show him into the smoking-room,' said the Baron. 'Now,' he continued to the Princess, 'if your Royal Highness will be patient for only three minutes I will come back.'

His fingers were on the handle of the door of communication, when the Princess ran to him and seized his other hand.

'You will tell me all,' she pleaded—'mind, all—won't you?'

He looked down into her sweet eyes, in which tears were already welling.

'Yes,' he said tenderly; 'never fear, I will tell you all.' And opening the door, he confronted Hoodlum, weary and travel-stained.

'Oh, Von Dalhoff,' began the American at once, 'I have brought bad news! The Emperor is well, thank God; but he has been seized—kidnapped—on board the *Philistia*, and carried off!'

For an instant the Baron was staggered.

'Kidnapped!' he repeated incredulously. 'Impossible! Emperors are not kidnapped nowadays. What

do you mean, Mr. Hoodlum? The Emperor was with friends of yours.'

'They are no friends of mine. They are people who deceived me in order to deceive the Emperor.'

'They are at least your acquaintances and your countrymen. But does his Majesty send no despatches?'

'I had forgotten,' said Hoodlum. 'Yes; there are letters—two for you and one for the Princess Nannette.' And he took them from his pocket and handed them to the Baron, who, after merely glancing at them, said:

'Well, if you will kindly remain here, I will inform the Princess. She may wish to see you.'

It was with very painful feelings that Von Dalhoff returned to the next room. He saw at once how far-reaching might be the political importance of the startling event of which he had just heard, and he could not be unmindful of its possible effects upon his fatherland. But, for the time, his chief sympathies were with the Princess, of whose devotion to her brother he was so fully aware; and if, on quitting her, he had felt deeply moved by the rising tears in her eyes, he now naturally felt a thousand times more sympathetic, and desirous, if possible, of softening the force of the blow which he knew must be inflicted.

She stood waiting for him.

'It is bad news!' she exclaimed, as he appeared.

He threw the letters upon a table, and, approaching her, took her hand.

'It is good news, and bad news too,' he said. 'The Emperor is well, and sends you a letter; but the

Emperor, too noble-minded to suspect treachery, has been deceived, and has been carried off to sea against his will.'

The Princess withdrew her hand from Von Dalhoff's, and supported herself against a chair.

'Who has dared?' she asked, her colour rising.

'They are Americans—the people whom Mr. Hoodlum introduced to his Majesty.'

'It is Mr. Hoodlum's conspiracy—I am sure it is!' the Princess declared impulsively.

'We may learn from his Majesty's letters,' said Von Dalhoff; 'but I cannot believe that Mr. Hoodlum is seriously to blame. With your Royal Highness's permission I will read my despatches.'

And, seating himself at the table, he opened the larger packet, while the Princess, now as pale as marble, stood over him with a hand on his shoulder, and followed the letter as he read it aloud. More than once ere he had finished did hot tears drop from the Princess's eyes upon the paper. At first they were tears only of sorrow, but then came tears of indignation and anger, and, before the postscript was ended, they had altogether ceased.

'Mr. Hoodlum is a villain,' burst out the Princess, 'and the Emperor is a hero! Oh, Baron, I am proud of my dear brother!'

'Mr. Hoodlum is not a villain,' said Von Dalhoff, who had opened the second letter and perused its brief contents. 'This exculpates him from any worse charge than one of having been imposed upon.'

'But I will never forgive him!' declared the Princess.

'The whole misfortune is due to his carelessness. Oh, if only I were a man, I would——' And instead of finishing the sentence, she stamped a foot.

'I must not waste time,' said Von Dalhoff, after a moment's pause. 'Is your Royal Highness content for me to follow the Emperor's instructions?'

'Content!—am I content?' she exclaimed. 'Why, you *must* follow them! There is nothing else to be done.'

'It will be necessary for your Royal Highness to condescend to treat me in all respects as a brother,' explained Von Dalhoff.

'If you can do what he wishes, and save Lusatia from trouble, and bring him back, it will not be difficult for me to treat you like a brother,' said the Princess. 'Each day you will earn more and more of my gratitude.'

'You must let me call you Nan, or "Pearl," you know,' said Von Dalhoff, who felt the difficulty of this *premier pas*.

'Yes, and I must call you Carl,' rejoined the Princess; 'and sometimes you must call me "little one," for when the Emperor is very pleased with me he calls me "little one." It is only a new habit of his, yet perhaps some people about the court have already noticed it. And now, please, go and show Mr. Hoodlum that the Emperor is not so far away as is believed. If you do it will produce the very best effect, and will stop the printing of any more alarmist paragraphs. While you are gone I will read my letter, and think. Oh, there will be worlds to think about!'

'Just once more,' said Von Dalhoff, 'I shall call you "Your Royal Highness." It is that I may tell you—as representing his Majesty the Emperor, my master—that, come what may, I will strive to do his will during his absence; and that I am loyally determined to keep my trust undimmed, and to work and labour effectively for him, for the royal house, for you, and for the nation, until his happy return, which Heaven grant may not be long delayed.'

The Princess stretched out her hand.

'I am sure you will, my dear Baron,' she said, with warm confidence.

'But thanks will be mainly due to your help and encouragement,' he added, as, having stooped and kissed her fingers, he left the room.

In the meantime, Hoodlum, in the smoking-room, was anxiously examining the newspapers, which, as they appeared, were brought in, according to custom, and placed in order upon the table. Their contents were rapidly becoming more and more alarmist. One journal gave prominence to the following telegram, dated from Friedenhaven:

'A seaman, who formed part of the crew of the *Adler's* steam launch, which returned last night to this port from Stubberup, tells a strange story, which, if it be true, cannot but excite apprehension. He says that the launch was towed astern of the *Philistia*, and that, consequently, it was impossible for the men in her to know what was going forward on the steamer's deck.

But he solemnly declares that, when the vessel was off Falster, he distinctly saw a bundle of six or seven swords thrown overboard from the *Philistia* on the starboard side. As the only persons on board the steamer who are likely to have worn swords are his Majesty the Emperor and his suite, this circumstance must give rise to suspicion. The man asserts that he at the time called the attention of others in the launch to the fact, but that he alone saw the swords fall into the water. In consequence of what he said to the lieutenant in charge of the boat, that officer, when it was first indicated to him by some of the *Philistia's* people that he was to take despatches on shore, decided not to obey without having obtained a distinct order from the Emperor or from Admiral Spott, and that he would have insisted upon boarding the ship to obtain this had not a written order from the Emperor been handed to him as soon as the launch reached the gangway. In face of that order he did not think himself justified in further hesitating. The uneasiness here is growing.'

Another telegram, dated from Farsund, a town near the southern point of Norway, announced that the *Philistia* had, in the early morning, passed that place, going west; and, in a leading article, headed 'If He Be Gone,' the paper which contained the telegram discussed, in a very suggestive manner, the dangerous situation in which Lusatia would find herself if her Emperor were suddenly snatched from her.

Hoodlum read and waited. The smoking-room in

which he sat was the room from a window of which the Emperor had been accustomed to watch the relief of the Palace Guard at noon; and the clatter of weapons in the courtyard, followed almost immediately by the commencement of the chiming of the great clock of the neighbouring Church of St. Hubertus, reminded the American that, though the Emperor might be absent, guard-mounting went on as usual.

'I wonder,' he thought to himself, as he gazed up at the great battle-piece over the carved fireplace, 'whether the people are yet becoming alarmed. If they are, there will be a crowd to witness the relief of the guard and to see whether or not the Emperor has come home.'

He turned to look out of the window, but his knees trembled as he faced it.

With his back towards him, there stood the Emperor, watching the scene in the courtyard, and returning in his usual kindly way the salute of the populace.

Hoodlum dropped powerless upon the chair, and gazed, as if spellbound, at the tall figure in front of him. The Emperor held one hand to his cap, behind his back he held the other, and upon the latter Hoodlum saw the well-known imperial ring.

The American was not habitually superstitious; but, knowing what he did, he could not at first resist the conclusion that the figure was either a spectre or the creature of his own excited brain. 'Perhaps,' he thought, 'this is a warning apparition. Perhaps worse evil than I know has befallen him.' Then another train of ideas entered his mind. 'The Emperor,' he reflected,

'may have escaped or have been landed soon after I left the ship. I hurried hither quickly; but it is true that I waited last night to dine at Roskilde, and so wasted an hour or two. He may—it is barely possible—have passed me on the way.'

Still the Emperor stood saluting, and Hoodlum, who could not speak, and who would not have ventured to do so had he been able, sat motionless in his chair, while a cold perspiration stood upon his brow.

Suddenly the Emperor turned, and, affecting to notice Hoodlum for the first time, said quite calmly:

'Well, here you are! You seem surprised to see me.'

The American staggered to his feet.

'Heaven be thanked that you have escaped!' he ejaculated fervently. 'How did you manage it, sir?'

The Emperor placed his forefinger significantly to his lips.

'There are some questions which cannot be conveniently answered, Hoodlum, and which had better not be, for the present, asked. You will know the story some day. The despatches?'

'They have been faithfully delivered, sir,' answered the astonished Hoodlum.

'I am deeply obliged to you—more obliged than I can say. And your own plans?'

'I shall follow your counsel, and leave Sandburg for a time. I was only waiting here to learn whether the Princess desired to see me.'

'I think she does not. I will not conceal from you that she blames you. But I will ask her.' And,

stepping to the door which led into the next room, the Emperor opened it and cried: 'I suppose that you don't want to see Mr. Hoodlum, Nan?'

Whereto the Princess significantly, and not too graciously, replied:

'Certainly not, Carl!'

An hour later Sandburg was happy again, and Hoodlum—puzzled, but thankful—was packing his trunks for London.

CHAPTER VII.

INCONSISTENCY.

THERE is no reason for believing that anyone in Sandburg, save only the Princess Nannette, suspected that the Emperor had not returned from the manœuvres, or that the man who that day appeared as the Emperor at the well-known corner window of the royal Palace was not the Emperor. If there had been doubts in the minds of any, these must have been dispelled when, in the afternoon, Von Dalhoff, with the Princess at his side, drove in the park, and when, in the evening, both occupied the royal box at the performance of 'Ariovistus' at the Royal Opera House, and acknowledged the warm greeting which the audience gave them.

Next morning all the papers contained a paragraph to the effect that it was unhappily true, as had been rumoured in certain quarters on the previous day, that a dastardly attempt had been made tc carry off his Imperial and Royal Majesty from Friedenhaven on board the steamship *Philistia*. Every effort would be made to capture and punish the criminals, who, in the meantime, had actually succeeded in carrying off Field-

Marshal Count Stark, Admiral Spott, and six officers whose names were mentioned. As it was not known for certain by whom the outrage had been instigated, and as undue publicity of the circumstance of the attempt might defeat the ends of justice and be prejudicial to the interests of the empire, it was deemed advisable to suppress details; but the people might be confident that the Imperial Government would take such measures as the occasion called for, and would be prompt in its pursuit of the offenders and in the rescue of the captives. It was intended to invite the co-operation of foreign Powers to this end, it being obviously to the advantage of civilization to spare no pains to put down acts of this abominable kind. At the same time, it must not be anticipated that the criminals would be immediately taken, since they were on board a fast and powerful vessel, which might keep the sea for a considerable period, and might not be caught, unless by stratagem, until she should be forced to call somewhere for coal or stores. During the enforced absence of the captives special grants would be made to their families and representatives, who, from what had been observed, might be easy in their minds as to the way in which the prisoners were being treated on board the *Philistia*. An imperial order, printed in the same papers, granted the Baron von Dalhoff six weeks' leave of absence beyond the frontiers of Lusatia.

At the various Lusatian dockyards fast cruisers were as rapidly as possible fitted out and commissioned to go in search of the kidnappers; and, within a few weeks,

ships of other Great Powers were ordered away for the same purpose; so that at the end of a couple of months there was quite a large international squadron in the Pacific. But of all that anon.

The news of the outrage naturally caused immense excitement throughout Lusatia. Much of this died down, however, after the proverbial nine days; and, as the Government did not think it necessary to make public particulars of all the measures that were being adopted, the newspapers gradually ceased to pay much attention to the subject, and decided to reserve their 'full and complete accounts,' and their further comments upon the heinousness of the affair, until such time as they should have facts and not merely rumours and imaginings to which to devote their space.

But not for one instant did the cruel fate of the Emperor cease to occupy the minds of Von Dalhoff and the Princess Nannette, to whose personal anxieties were added a thousand daily troubles and worries which grew spontaneously out of the extraordinary situation that had been created.

The most puzzling and the most pressing of all these questions was the question of the Princess Griselda of Stormarn. Her marriage with the Emperor had been fixed for October 20, and, as has been seen, it was already October 10 when Hoodlum arrived at Sandburg with the despatches which showed that the wedding could not possibly take place on the appointed day, and must, upon some specious pretext, be postponed indefinitely.

An anxious telegram from the Princess Griselda to

the Princess Nannette arrived at Sandburg almost as soon as Hoodlum did. 'Am uneasy,' it ran, 'about the strange reports concerning the Emperor. Please send full particulars.' The Princess Nannette showed this to Von Dalhoff as soon as she had an opportunity.

'Poor girl!' she said. 'How shall I break the news? It will come to her as a terrible shock.'

'Either the Princess ought to be asked to come here, or you ought to go to Stormarn, I think,' replied Von Dalhoff. 'It is quite certain that I cannot do much. On the other hand, if you go away just now, my position will be more precarious than ever. First of all, however, we must telegraph that the Emperor is quite well, and that you are writing to the Princess.'

'Yes, we must reassure her for the present, and, as you say, I ought not to risk leaving Sandburg yet. I will telegraph and write; but oh! what shall I write? The Princess Griselda is very sweet and sensible, and she is so devoted to my brother that, if only I had her here and could explain all, I am sure she would do anything and everything for us. But who can foretell what might be the effect upon her of a brusque revelation by letter? She might not be able to control her agitation; her father, the Duke, might insist upon explanations, and then my brother's secret might ooze out, and it must not do so. At all hazards we must keep it.'

Von Dalhoff was very puzzled. 'Cannot you invent some pretext,' he suggested, 'for asking the Princess to visit you here for a day or two? You would like to have her further advice about the furnishing of her apart-

ments, or you think that it would amuse her to come over incognito, and to see the preparations that are being made for her reception.'

'I must discover some excuse,' returned the Princess, 'though I hate to be obliged to deceive her, even for a moment. And when she comes, what can be done? We shall surmount one difficulty only to find a loftier one in front of us.'

'Let us first get the Princess here,' said Von Dalhoff.

'I know what must happen,' cried the Princess Nannette suddenly. 'She must exercise her woman's privilege of altering her mind. Here in Lusatia, thank Heaven! not even princes and princesses are expected to give their hands when they cannot give their hearts. My dear brother's engagement has been so popular because it has been an affair of love and not a mere matter of policy. The Princess Griselda must now alter her mind.'

'I am afraid,' ventured Von Dalhoff, 'that if she were to do so, it would be injurious both to the Princess and to the Emperor. We Lusatians all attach a sacred importance to the formal betrothal. People are not supposed to betroth themselves until they have deliberately made their minds up. If, therefore, the engagement were now to be broken off, the characters of both parties would suffer. The Princess would be suspected of frivolity—a reproach which we must not for an instant permit to be cast upon the future Empress; the Emperor might justly be considered to have received a deadly insult, which he must have done something to

provoke. Moreover, any such rupture as we imagine is antecedently improbable. The whole country knows how deep and sincere are the feelings which bind together the Emperor and the Princess of Stormarn.'

The Princess looked disappointed.

'All that is quite true,' she admitted; 'but what is to be done? You can't marry the Princess Griselda, so much is certain; yet, on the twentieth, either there must be a wedding or all the world must have before it good reasons why the wedding is not to be celebrated. We might persuade the Princess to feign illness; but she cannot feign illness for an indefinite period. Besides, it would subject her to too much restraint and discomfort.'

'Perhaps the Princess Griselda herself can suggest a good excuse,' said Von Dalhoff. 'She will assuredly help us if she can.'

'Well,' replied the Princess, 'we can but get her here and see. I will telegraph and write at once, and tell her that come she must. In the meantime, perhaps we shall think of something.'

There was in the Princess Nannette's letter a vague undertone of reticence and mystery which, though it did not actually alarm the Princess Griselda, excited her curiosity and determined her, if she could, to go to Sandburg with the least possible delay.

When young ladies—be they princesses or commoners—who are only daughters of fond and devoted fathers, and who are on the eve of leaving home to get married, choose to adopt sudden whims, those whims, being in

themselves harmless, are very likely to be gratified; and when the Princess informed her father of her desire to pay a two days' incognito visit to the Princess Nannette in order to talk over and settle urgent private affairs, she had little difficulty in persuading him to be her escort to Sandburg.

Nor was the Duke, for his own part, indisposed to see his future son-in-law once more before the wedding. Indeed, he was glad of a decent excuse; for, ever since the announcement of the betrothal, he had privately cherished a hope that the brilliant marriage of his daughter might, in an innocent way, be turned to his own advantage.

It must not be supposed that the Duke of Stormarn was, in any sense of the words, a mercenary father. On the contrary, he was desirous, above all things, to see his daughter happy; and to render her happy he would have gladly made many personal sacrifices. But he also had at heart the welfare and glory of his house.

Stormarn, it must be explained, was one of several principalities and duchies which, though once independent, had, under the Emperor's father and grandfather, been absorbed by Ruhland. Some had been absorbed by arrangement, others as the result of war; for the great and powerful Lusatian Empire had not been built up without struggle and bloodshed at home as well as abroad. Stormarn was one of those which had been absorbed as the result of war. The gallant Stormarners, not excepting their Duke, had long since learnt to congratulate themselves upon the fact that

instead of being, as they once were, a weak people, having only their own limited resources to trust to, they had behind them the whole giant strength of Lusatia, and were no longer at the mercy of third-rate Powers. They had forgiven Ruhland for having forcibly made them Lusatians; but they had not forgiven Ruhland for having at the same time destroyed their autonomy and mediatized their Duke. They looked around them, and among the States forming the Lusatian Empire they saw several which, though smaller, poorer, and less populous than Stormarn, still preserved their autonomy. There was, for example, the little Duchy of Zwieback—a State which an able-bodied man could walk round in a day, and which had a total population of less than fifty thousand souls. Yet the Duke of Zwieback kept his court and his prime minister, and had foreign representatives accredited to him; and the inhabitants of Zwieback supported a Diet, with ministerial and opposition parties all complete. Moreover, although Zwieback did not maintain a separate army, it did maintain the 9th battalion of the Lusatian Jägers, and the officers and men who formed this gallant corps wore the Zwieback cockade of purple, gold and green, and the distinctive Zwieback sword knots of green and gold. Nay, they had their own buttons, bearing the arms of the Duke. The men supplied by Stormarn were seven or eight times as numerous, but they wore the cockades and colours of the empire, and were dispersed throughout the Lusatian army, or at least throughout several army corps.

The Duke of Stormarn and his former subjects were of opinion that, since Stormarn had loyally accepted the inevitable, and since the good disposition of the Stormarners was above suspicion, the nationality of Stormarn ought to be revived, and the State ought to be raised at least to a dignity equal with that enjoyed by Zwieback; and they considered that the approaching marriage of the Emperor to the Duke's only daughter afforded a favourable opportunity for the putting forward of their aspirations.

This idea had not occurred to them at first; and not until after the engagement had been formally announced did they decide that it was their duty to endeavour to make political capital out of it. The father-in-law of the Emperor ought not, they contended, to be a Duke only in name, seeing that but a few years before he had been a Duke regnant, and that there were no weighty reasons against the restoration to him of his Duchy. The Stormarners, therefore, presented to the Duke a memorial on the subject, and begged him to lay it before the Emperor; and the Duke himself, though a little nervous and hesitating, agreed with the honest Stormarners that to reign once more was the very thing which would suit him. His nervousness and hesitation had, nevertheless, caused him to delay bringing the memorial to the Emperor's attention; and he had already begun to feel a little ashamed of his lack of decision, when his daughter's desire to go to Sandburg provided him with an excuse for seeing his destined son-in-law at a moment when, in all probability, the

latter would be particularly inclined to be gracious to him.

On the afternoon of the eleventh, therefore, the Duke and his daughter, travelling incognito, took train for Sandburg.

The Duke had not previously spoken to the Princess Griselda upon the subject, and, with a view to winning her over as his ally, he confided his secret to her on the journey.

'I am anxious, my dear,' he said, 'to seize this opportunity in order to crave a little favour from your future husband. It will cost him nothing. On the other hand, it will delight our good Stormarners; it will give dignity to you (not that you lack dignity, my dear); and—well, I will not conceal from you that it will be highly gratifying to me.' And with this preamble he produced the memorial, and explained exactly what it aimed at. 'You must help me, my dear,' he added. 'I know that young lovers are very susceptible to wheedling. It is a harmless request, and a judicious word or two from you will act like a charm.'

'I am afraid, father,' she replied, 'that I do not sufficiently understand all the bearings of such affairs as this. Doubtless, if the Emperor should think it right, he will do as he is desired to do; and, doubtless, if I asked a favour which was really a harmless one, he would not refuse it. But I am not sure that I ought to interfere in a matter of this sort. You know how glad I should be to feel that you and our dear Stormarners were satisfied; but if I, who do not understand politics,

were to prefer the request, I might, on the one hand, pain the Emperor by obliging him to refuse me, or, on the other, prejudice the Empire by securing something which should have been denied me. I think, father, that you, and you alone, ought to speak to the Emperor.'

'Very well, my dear,' said the Duke, who, though a little hurt, gave way, as he always did, to the Princess. 'I dare say you know best. But if occasion should offer, and if you find that you can do us any good, always remember your fatherland.'

And he changed the subject, confident that nothing which he might say would cause his daughter to swerve from the path in which she believed her duty to lie.

Von Dalhoff could not make up his mind that it was his duty to meet the Princess Griselda at the station. He had only once seen her; he had never heard her speak; and he had no precedent to guide him as to the manner in which, as Emperor, he ought to receive his betrothed on a railway platform. He did not know whether, if he met the Princess, she would expect him merely to shake hands with her or to kiss her; and he had no desire, in view of the explanations that were to be subsequently given, to put the Princess to confusion. He contrived, therefore, to be a few miles out of Sandburg at the moment when the train arrived, and the Princess Nannette met it, and made the necessary apologies for his absence.

'And how is the Emperor?' asked the Duke, as the

party was being driven to the Palace. 'What an extraordinary escape he appears to have had! It is really most romantic!'

'I hope that when you see him you will find him none the worse,' replied the Princess Nannette guardedly. 'He, no doubt, will tell you the story. It has caused me great anxiety, I assure you. I don't like romances of this sort.'

The Duke, who was one of the most nervous and susceptible people in existence, imagined that his reference to so serious an episode as a romantic adventure had given offence, and he was thenceforward silent until the carriage stopped. At the Palace he was promptly shown to his apartments, and the two Princesses went off together to the Princess Nannette's rooms.

The first impulse of the two girls when they were alone was to warmly embrace one another. But they were influenced by very different feelings. The Princess Griselda was happy and light-hearted; the Princess Nannette was wretched, and, as she kissed her future sister-in-law, she burst into tears, and then clung to her and sobbed more bitterly than she had ever sobbed before.

'Why, Nan, what is the matter?' asked the Princess Griselda in astonishment.

'Oh, Grisel, I have had to pretend, and I have had to be brave for his sake! But it is not true that he has escaped.'

'What!' exclaimed the Princess of Stormarn, sobered in an instant. 'What are you saying, Nan?'

'It is terrible! They have carried him off, and he is now far away at sea! We had to deceive you until we could get you here. We dare not let the truth be known, for the consequences might be frightful! Besides, it is his wish. Oh, Grisel, I am so sorry for you!'

'What are you saying, Nan?' repeated the Princess Griselda, whose face was flushed, and into whose eyes the tears were starting. 'Tell me, tell me all! It is incredible!'

The Princess Nannette told the whole story as fully and as consecutively as her emotion would permit; and then delivered her brother's letter, which the Princess of Stormarn kissed and wept over and kissed again.

'And now, my poor Grisel, you understand everything,' said the Princess of Ruhland. 'You know what it must have cost me to bear up, and to help the Baron, and what it must have cost me to deceive you, even for a day. It is such a relief to see you here, and to be able to have a good cry. But crying will not benefit us; and we are all placed in a position of such fearful responsibility that I am absolutely ashamed when I think for a moment of personal matters. We must trust in God, dear; and in the meantime we must do our best. You, too, will help, my poor Grisel; I know you will, for his sake, and for the sake of Lusatia, which he loves so much.'

'But what can I do?' asked the Princess of Stormarn bitterly. 'I am in the way; I see that.'

'Hush!' said the Princess Nannette. 'How can his betrothed wife be in the way? What is our trouble is your trouble, and what is yours is ours. Our interests are all in common. We must act together.'

'Yes, dear,' returned the Princess Griselda affectionately. 'I did not mean to say an unkind word, or to suggest that my trouble is half as important as his, or as yours. But I meant that the wedding is in the way. Must it go forth that he, who loves me and of whom I am so proud, has cast me off? Oh, Nan! must people be told that? I know that the secret must be kept! I know that some excuse must be found for breaking off——'

'No, no, dear!' interrupted the Princess Nannette. 'A thousand times no! Not for breaking off! If that were the alternative, I would not for an instant entertain it, but would at once myself proclaim the truth and risk all consequences. I could not have my brother so dishonoured. But some excuse must be found for postponing the wedding.'

'If I were to go out of my mind,' said the Princess Griselda, 'it would be easy. And, indeed, the news is almost bad enough to drive me out of my mind. But forgive me, dear! I am selfish. Yes, we must both think of him first, and of Lusatia.'

'And you can invent some excuse for the postponement of the wedding, dear; I am sure you can,' urged the Princess of Ruhland; 'some excuse which may, nevertheless, permit you to be married as soon as he comes back.'

The Princess Griselda dried her eyes and walked to the window.

'My father,' she said, after a pause, 'came primed to-day with a memorial which he has been asked by the Stormarners to lay before the Emperor. They want him to reign again.'

'Why, Grisel,' broke in the Princess of Ruhland, 'do you know that that is the very thing which the Emperor had determined upon? The Duchy was to be restored on your wedding-day. But I imagined that it was a secret.'

'I thought that an excuse might be created out of the Emperor's refusal to entertain the idea,' said the Princess of Stormarn; 'but, of course, if the matter has been already decided——'

'Wait!' cried the Princess Nannette. 'Surely that offers us a key to the difficulty. The Emperor's intention has not been made public; but, as it is known to us, we can, perhaps, utilize it. Your father will speak on the subject to the Baron von Dalhoff—or, as he believes, to the Emperor?'

'I suppose so.'

'Well, of course Von Dalhoff will not commit himself to an immediate reply. He will want to consult with the ministers, and perhaps with me. I will make him return a qualified refusal. Then, knowing what you do, you can assure your father that you are convinced of obtaining for him a satisfactory answer; and you can say that, unless and until you get that satisfactory answer, you will postpone the marriage.'

'But,' objected the Princess Griselda, 'I have already

told my father that I cannot undertake to attempt to influence the Emperor concerning a political matter like this.'

'No matter, Grisel. A woman may change her mind. You are going to become a very patriotic Stormarner. You are going to champion the restoration of the Duchy. I shall aid and abet you. I shall think it a cruel thing to withhold the restoration. We must not make a public grievance of the matter, for it will not do to foment popular dissatisfaction; but it can be announced that the celebration of the wedding is delayed pending the settlement of certain arrangements concerning the future status of your father. We must take advantage of the opportunity, for I see no other excuse; and this one will enable us, without explaining things to him, to satisfy your father as to the postponement.'

'I am but a poor actress, Nan,' said the Princess of Stormarn, 'and I hate deception and subterfuge of all kinds; but, if it be necessary, I will do what I can.'

'I think it is necessary, Grisel. I, too, hate the daily deception to which I am now reduced. So also, I am sure, does the Baron, who is really the most devoted and self-sacrificing servant whom any sovereign could desire. But what else can we do? If it were known that the Emperor is where he is, who can say what would happen? The Emperor holds Europe steady! I know it; I every hour have proofs of it. Tell the world that my brother has no longer the power to enforce his policy—confess that he has vanished, and that the Emperor's uniform hides only the Baron von Dalhoff—

and, even though Von Dalhoff should possess the ability of a Napoleon or of a Frederick, he would not be able to avert a catastrophe. The Emperor knows it, I know it, Von Dalhoff knows it. It was an Englishman who defined an ambassador as "one sent to lie abroad for the benefit of his country." It is our mission to lie at home for the benefit of Europe! And now, Grisel dear, you must see our Baron. It will be, I am afraid, another shock to you, for he is so like the Emperor that you will scarcely detect the difference. Recollect, moreover, that you must treat him as the Emperor, especially in your father's presence. You will find him very kind, sympathetic and considerate.'

'I hope I shan't be so foolish as to cry again,' said the Princess of Stormarn, as, having hastily looked at her pretty face in the glass, she followed the Princess Nannette out into the corridor and along it to the Emperor's library, whither Von Dalhoff, who had been absent from Sandburg only just long enough to excuse his non-appearance at the station, had by this time returned.

He was fortunately alone, for the Duke had not yet joined him; but the introduction had barely been effected, and the Princess Griselda had not accustomed herself to the strangeness of the situation, when her father entered the room, and, with the fatherly manner which he already affected, advanced to greet and embrace the man whom he supposed to be his future son-in-law.

'Well, my dear Carl, how goes it?' he said. 'You

see that I have been taking good care of our Grisel for you. She is looking very well, is she not?—perhaps a little pale, for the moment, after the fatigue of the journey, or because of the pleasant excitement of the meeting. Who can say?'

'The Princess, your Highness, is always beautiful,' replied Von Dalhoff gallantly; but, feeling that the Princess was rather a troublesome subject, he promptly turned the conversation into other channels.

The Duke, whose memorial was in his pocket, where it burnt him sadly, did not care what he talked about, so long as there was a chance that one of the subjects would insensibly lead up to the matter of the restoration of the Duchy; but as the weather, the recent manœuvres, the *Philistia* affair (concerning which Von Dalhoff was very reticent), the new Lusatian rifle and foreign policy, did not conduct the talk in the desired direction, the Duke at last plucked up all the courage he possessed, and, taking his host by the buttonhole, drew him to a window.

'I want,' he said with hesitation, 'to talk to you about an affair—a very small affair, as some may think it—which has of late, and especially since Griselda's happy engagement, attracted the attention of my good neighbours in Stormarn. I need scarcely recall to you the circumstances, sad in themselves, yet most fortunate in their results, of the absorption of the ancient Duchy. We in Stormarn forget those days in the present happiness of feeling that we are Lusatians. At the same time, some among us are beginning—with all

loyalty, as I need hardly assure you, to the Empire—to hope that in the future, perhaps in the near future, Stormarn, while not ceasing to be less Lusatian than it now is in interests and aspirations, may resume a portion of its old dignity, and may, in fact, become again a Duchy of the Empire—as, for example, Zwieback is—with my unworthy self in the position of its head.'

'I'm afraid, your Highness,' said Von Dalhoff, 'that this is too large a question to be immediately decided.'

'Of course, my dear Carl, of course,' assented the pliant Duke. 'You couldn't think of saying Yes or No upon the spur of the moment to such a proposition. I don't bring it forward for my own sake or upon my own initiative, you must understand. The good people in my part of the world have been pressing me to mention it, and have, in point of fact, humbly put forward their hopes in this memorial' (he drew it from his pocket) 'which, I have no doubt, you will find leisure to peruse. Really, I am ashamed of my remissness, for you will perceive that the memorial was drawn up nearly two months ago. But the truth is that I was very unwilling to trouble you. For myself, I should have been content to let things remain as they are, quite content. My good neighbours, however, are of another opinion. So, to please them, you understand, entirely to please them, I consented to lay the affair before you.'

'For the present, your Highness,' said Von Dalhoff, 'I can only promise that due consideration shall be given to the matter.'

'I am sure it will, my dear Carl; I am sure it will,'

echoed the Duke, who felt very happy that he had thus relieved himself of a disagreeable business.

A few hours later the Duke and his daughter found themselves alone together.

'Well, father,' asked the Princess, 'what is the answer to the memorial?'

'There is no answer as yet,' replied the Duke; 'and I'm not at all sure, from the Emperor's manner, that he thinks favourably of the idea. If he should fail to consent, however, we in Stormarn shall be no worse off than we are; and, in truth, we have very little to complain of.'

'Why, father,' said the Princess, who proved a much better actress than she had suspected, 'only this morning you were quite hot on the subject! I have since been thinking about it. I do not regard it as lightly as you now seem to. There appears to be nothing against the project. Only press for it, and I feel sure that you will get what you wish. Everyone admits that the Duchy can, without the slightest prejudice, be restored. Nannette herself says so.'

'Does she, indeed?' exclaimed the Duke. 'But is it worth while to press the matter seriously?'

'Worth while, father? I should think it is. Am I more of a Stormarner than you? Have I as much interest in pressing the matter as you have? Yet even I intend to press it—ay, and to win the concession. I promise you that there will be no wedding on the twentieth unless the business be first satisfactorily settled.'

'Good heavens, my dear!' cried the astonished Duke. 'What are you about to risk? Your promised position? Your magnificent future? My dear girl, this is the height of rashness. I beg of you not to dream of taking such a decided step.'

'I certainly shall take it. Indeed, I have taken it; for I have myself mentioned the subject, and my ultimatum is known.'

'You are mad, Griselda! I shall tell the Emperor that the matter is quite unimportant, and that I beg him not to give it any further thought.'

'It will make no difference to me, my dear father. The Duchy must be restored before I marry the Emperor.'

The Duke wrung his hands, and hurried away to take counsel with the Princess Nannette, who, to his horror, supported the Princess Griselda. He had not courage to reopen the discussion with Von Dalhoff; and next day, in a very miserable frame of mind, he returned with his daughter to Stormarn.

On the following morning, at the head of the 'Court Intelligence' in all the papers of the empire, there appeared in large type the astonishing news that, in consequence of the non-completion of certain family and political arrangements between his Imperial and Royal Majesty, the Emperor, and his Highness the Duke of Stormarn, the projected marriage of the Emperor with her Highness the Princess Griselda of Stormarn would not take place until a date later than the one which had been originally fixed upon. And all Lusatia wondered.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF COLONEL SNAGGS.

In the meantime the *Philistia*, steaming at easy speed, was leaving Lusatia behind her at the rate of fifteen knots an hour. Her course lay across the North Sea, between the Shetlands and the Orkneys, and then southwards past the Canaries and Cape Verds, neither of which clusters was, however, sighted. Getting into the trades, she put out her fires, and made more leisurely progress under sail. On November 16th, about six weeks after she had left Friedenhaven, she was in the latitude of Rio de Janeiro, and received her first practical reminder that she had become an Ishmaelite of the ocean, and that every man's hand was against her.

The news of the kidnapping of Count Stark, Admiral Spott and the rest of the Emperor's suite had, as has been already mentioned, been communicated to the governments of the principal Powers, several of which undertook to co-operate with a view to the capture of the pirate. Of these powers Great Britain was naturally one. The British Admiralty had been confidentially informed that sooner or later the *Philistia* would pro-

ceed to Sala-y-Gomez, and although it could not, of course, be foreseen whether she would go thither by way of the Cape of Good Hope or by way of Cape Horn, the precaution was taken of ordering both routes to be carefully watched.

Colonel Snaggs, who had long since recovered from the effects of Hoodlum's assault, had anticipated that some such orders would probably be given, and having provided himself beforehand with lists of all the men-of-war on the various stations, he had arrived at the conclusion that by choosing the Horn route he would expose himself less than by choosing the other. The *Philistia* was, therefore, on her way to Cape Horn, and on November 16th, with fires once more lighted, but with steam only in two boilers, was bowling comfortably along at a speed not exceeding nine knots, when out of a bank of mist that lay on her starboard beam at a distance of perhaps three miles, came her Britannic Majesty's ship *Tourmaline*.

The *Tourmaline* had received telegraphic instructions a fortnight earlier, while lying at Bahia, and had since been cruising in the track of ships, and looking out unceasingly for the ex-Cunarder. There must, therefore, have been some pleasurable excitement in the man-of-war when, after all hope of success had apparently departed, the quarry was thus suddenly sighted. But sighting the quarry was one thing, and catching it was, for the unfortunate *Tourmaline*, another and a very different one. It is true that, when sighted, the *Philistia* had steam for only nine knots, but it is true

also that the *Tourmaline*, an old cruiser which had survived its usefulness, was at the time quite incapable, in any circumstances, of doing more than ten and a half. Had the British on that day been represented by a modern ship, the piratical career of the *Philistia* would have thereupon ended. Even as things were the ex-Cunarder had a narrow escape, for, although she was at once headed away from the cruiser, and additional furnaces were lighted up, the *Tourmaline* steadily gained on her, and before an hour had elapsed was well within a couple of miles of the chase, and might, with her five-inch and six-inch guns, had she chosen, have damaged if not sunk the latter. But the English captain, hopeful of getting alongside the *Philistia* ere she could raise more steam, and fearful of hitting the Lusatian officers whom he was endeavouring to rescue, abstained, until it was too late, from firing; and only fired at last when the *Philistia*, having by great exertions increased her speed, was already quickly drawing away from him. A couple of projectiles flew harmlessly over the steamer, three or four more splashed the water astern of her, and then, realizing that he had let slip his chance, the captain of the *Tourmaline* regretfully headed his ship for Rio, whence, two days later, he despatched by telegraph an account of his proceedings.

Since his abduction the Emperor, up to the moment of the *Tourmaline's* appearance, had been very moody and depressed. He had forbidden his suite to hold intercourse with their captors, had studiously repulsed the almost daily advances of Snaggs, had been barely

civil to the less intrusive and more respectful Rawlins, and had lived apart, occupying himself chiefly in reading, and in writing letters which he vainly hoped he might find opportunities for sending home.

The grateful sight of the white ensign at the *Tourmaline's* peak aroused both him and his companions in misfortune. They stood together abaft the *Philistia's* wheelhouse during the whole of the short chase: they noted with joy how at first the cruiser gained upon them; they saw with sinking hearts how at length she dropped astern again; and not even when her shells were shrieking over their heads did they move. Only when she was once more hull down on the horizon did they go back to their cabins, disappointed and dejected.

But the *Tourmaline's* attempt was not without a good effect upon the spirits of the prisoners. It caused them to ask themselves whether, if they were again chased, they might not do something to assist their would-be deliverers; and the discussion of this question not only brightened up their rusting energies, but also gave new hopes to their hearts. The captives began to make plots, and the Emperor's outer cabin became a meeting-place for honest conspirators. One officer put forward a plan by means of which one or both of the ship's screws might be opportunely fouled when next a friendly ship came in sight. He proposed to use a heavy hawser as an entanglement. Another produced a project for rendering the engines useless by placing an iron bolt, or something of the sort, between two moving parts of the machinery, and so smashing or bending them. Another

wished to cut away the funnel-stays, and so to enable the funnels to be easily rolled out of the ship in the first spell of heavy weather. And some scheme of self-help would, no doubt, have been sooner or later adopted had not Snaggs grown suspicious, and set men to act as eavesdroppers.

When these men had sufficiently familiarized him with the swelling plots, the Colonel, with a revolver in each hand, and followed by half a dozen of his friends similarly furnished, burst one day into the outer cabin while conversation was in progress, and plainly declared that anyone who should for the future, either by word or act, seek to damage the ship, impair her speed, or frustrate the intentions of those in charge of her, would be promptly and without hesitation shot.

'It is all the same to me,' he added, 'what you are or who you are. I shall shoot, and I guess you'll have yourselves to thank for the consequences; so I reckon you had best study Christian resignation, and squarely make up your minds that you're not goin' to get out of this until your ransom's paid, every cent of it. I don't want unpleasantness, gentlemen; but, you bet, where there's any of this sort of conspiring, unpleasantness is bound to follow. I just won't have it, and that's exactly the size of it; so now you know.'

Colonel Snaggs's authority was for the moment so palpably in the ascendant, and any further attempts at that time to run counter to it were so obviously destined to end in nothing but disaster, that the Emperor prohibited his suite from making more plots, and merely gave

general directions that his officers should remain on the alert to take advantage of such opportunities as might present themselves for seizing or disabling the vessel; but the Americans, warned by what they had overheard, gave their captives no chances, and ere many weeks had elapsed the Lusatians reconciled themselves to the conclusion that they could do little or nothing to help themselves, and that their salvation must come from without.

Snaggs, sanguine though he was, had no expectation that the ransom would be immediately deposited on Sala-y-Gomez. A sum of gold equal to five millions sterling could not, he knew, be collected in a moment, even by the wealthiest Power. Moreover, the packing and shipping of it to its destination would, in the most favourable circumstances, occupy a considerable time; he therefore determined not to proceed directly to the rendezvous, but to loiter for a while among some of the less known islands of the South Pacific, and to utilize his opportunities for taking on board fresh meat and vegetables, and for economizing his coal.

In pursuance of this policy, he steered, after rounding Cape Horn, for the island of Rapa, or Oparo, a little-visited spot, which in 1867 would have been made a coaling depôt for the Panama and New Zealand steamers, had not Captain Quentin, of the French man-of-war *Latouche-Tréville*, taken time by the forelock, and purchased the sovereignty from the king for a gallon of rum and a few old clothes. Ever since, the island has been nominally a French protectorate, and has had a

French resident billeted on it, though it is still practically independent. Once thickly inhabited, it is now very sparsely peopled by a fine and manly race, of the New Zealand type, and it possesses bold coasts, and on the eastern side an excellent harbour, called Ahurei, which is most romantically situated. Into this the *Philistia* steamed, and, anchoring, sent two men ashore with instructions to ascend the highest of the many needle-shaped peaks with which the island abounds, and to promptly signal the approach of any suspicious sail.

There are few harbours in the world more snug or more beautiful. On three sides the land rises like the wall of an amphitheatre, and on the fourth side there are several reefs and a small islet, which protect the bay from the almost ceaseless swell. The 'capital,' a small village, lies on the shore close at hand; native canoes ply freely across the harbour, save when, as happens at certain seasons, squalls rush down from the ragged hills of the interior. The climate is equable and delightful; and though the natives are poor, they appear to have sufficient for their modest wants, and to be, upon the whole, as happy as people who live in a terrestrial paradise ought to be.

Here the *Philistia* lay for nearly a fortnight, obtaining plenty of goats, one or two sheep, and as much taro-root and vegetables as was desired. The appearance of the ship caused much excitement in the mind of the French resident, who put off in his boat to make inquiries, but was not allowed on board; whereupon he demanded a bill of health and port dues, and became not only very

angry, but also very terrified, when no notice was taken of his demands. A small vessel which had come from Tahiti to fetch a cargo of goats was chartered by him, and hastily sent back empty with intelligence that a suspicious American ship of enormous size had descended upon the place, had transgressed all the rules and regulations, and, no doubt, intended to annex the island, in spite of France's protectorate over it; and the resident, while awaiting the arrival of a gunboat, had sleepless nights, and trembled for the safety of Rapa. But the *Philistia* did not stay for the French gunboat, for one afternoon the signalmen on the hill reported that a strange vessel, probably a man-of-war, was approaching from the south-west; and an hour later the *Philistia*, with her men on board again, was at sea, chased by the Lusatian cruiser *Chriemhild*, a vessel which was a much more formidable pursuer than the *Tourmaline* had been, for she could at a pinch command a speed of nearly eighteen knots.

Snaggs, who succeeded in getting only about three miles' start, led the cruiser to the east-south-east in the direction of the group of four rocks that are known as the Bass Isles, and that lie about forty-five miles from Rapa. The *Chriemhild* fired as soon as she was fairly within range of the pirate, and continued to do so so long as she had the *Philistia* in sight; but by placing the Bass Isles between himself and the man-of-war, and by keeping them there until nightfall, the Hon. Barnwell managed not only to avoid being hit, but also during the darkness to make his escape to the north-west, and, on

the next day but one, took his ship within the encircling reef of the Gambier, or Manga Reva Islands, and anchored under Mount Duff. Entrance to this lagoon has to be effected with care; but Snaggs's captain, who knew the Pacific well, went in with a boat sounding ahead of him, and, when inside, had the satisfaction of knowing that he could not easily be caught there, as there was more than one channel through which he could get out again.

At Manga Reva there are fewer supplies than at Rapa, and the natives are of an entirely different race, being of a decidedly Asiatic type of countenance, and very fair and handsome; but the people, Roman Catholics of some degree of civilization, are all hospitable. The scenery is fine, the anchorage is good, and the climate is pleasant. At Manga Reva the *Philistia* lay very comfortably for ten days, at the expiration of which time Colonel Snaggs decided to steam for Sala-y-Gomez, and to satisfy himself as to whether or not the treasure had been landed there.

The course lay nearly due east, and Pitcairn, Elizabeth, Ducie, and Easter Islands were all sighted on the way. Sala-y-Gomez is about five degrees due east of the last-named, and it is little more than a heap of rugged brown stones cast up by the Pacific three hundred and fifty miles, or thereabouts, from any other spot of land. It has no inhabitants save a few sea-gulls; it offers neither food nor water to the ocean wanderer, and the only vegetation which it produces is a species of moss. Captain Sala-y-Gomez discovered it in 1793; an

American skipper named Gwyn sighted it in 1802; the Spaniards visited it a second time in 1805; and Kotzebue, Beechey, and Mr. Scott, master of the British barque *Druid*, have since examined it; but it is now seldom sighted, and for this reason it was well selected by Snaggs as the place of deposit for the Emperor's ransom.

The Lusatians had been more than three months on board the *Philistia* when, on January 23rd, a full-rigged two-funnelled man-of-war, which was afterwards ascertained to be the Lusatian cruiser *Wrangel*, was discovered, apparently lying-to, right ahead. Twenty minutes later it was seen that all her boats were out, and that they were busily engaged in landing a number of chests on the south-west side of Sala-y-Gomez, off which the vessel lay.

On board the *Philistia*, which was also brought-to, there was much excitement, both among the captors and among the captives. Snaggs did not attempt to conceal his triumph. His plot was assured of a successful issue; for was not the ransom of twenty-five millions of dollars being sent ashore under his very eyes? The Emperor, on the other hand, was disappointed. He had expressly desired that no effort should be made to ransom him; but that either he should be recaptured by force, or that measures should be taken for reducing the *Philistia* by continual harrying of her, and by rendering it impossible for her to obtain supplies. Yet, so far as he could judge, his wishes were not being attended to, and the ransom had not only been collected,

but was actually being tamely made ready for delivery to the scoundrels, the very idea of coming to terms with whom revolted him.

The Cunarder lay just out of gunshot of the *Wrangel*, and everyone in her, including the Emperor and his suite, glasses in hand, was watching the boats as they pulled to the island, when a man who was on the look-out in the crow's-nest on the foremast sighted a steamer coming up rapidly from the southward. An instant later he reported another, over the island to the northward; and, almost ere the *Philistia* could be got under way, he announced that a third was approaching from the south-west.

'This is a trap for us,' said Rawlins, who was on the bridge, to Snaggs. 'I could hardly believe that they were going to throw up their hands without a word, and leave us to carry off the boodle at our ease.'

'Never you mind,' rejoined Snaggs. 'There's the boodle right enough, and if we can't take it now, we can take it to-morrow or some other day; and on that you may bet your sweet life. It ain't in reason that they want to give up the twenty-five million dollars without a struggle—who would? But they'll soon see the all-fired uselessness of tryin' to catch such a daisy of a flyer as the *Philistia*; and they'll give up the game, and be glad to take their precious Emperor on our terms.'

And he turned to consult with the captain, who, having got the ship round with her head to seaward, and having plenty of steam ready, put her on a north-

westerly course. He would have preferred to run to the eastward, but in order to do so, and to avoid the vessel that was coming up from the southward, he would have had to pass dangerously close to the *Wrangel*. No sooner did his intentions become clear than the ship to the northward and the ship to the south-west altered course, and the *Philistia's* captain presently saw that, do what he would, he ran extreme risk of being taken; for, an hour later, he made out that the northerly ship was his old friend the *Chriemhild*, and the south-westerly one the still more formidable and fast British cruiser *Theseus*. They were, fortunately for the Americans, not within signalling distance of one another when they were first sighted, and so for a period they were unable to act in concert; but the *Wrangel* soon communicated her views to both of them, and upon receiving them they began a systematic endeavour to cut off the *Philistia*, the *Chriemhild* trying to head her, and so, by forcing her to alter her helm, to drive her towards the *Theseus*.

The sky was clear and the ocean was calm, and as the Lusatian officers, barely repressing their excitement, were again gathered on the poop, they saw a pretty sight. On their starboard beam, swerving always to starboard, was their own *Chriemhild*, distant as yet, but throwing up around her sharp bows a great white wash of water, and pouring forth from her numerous fires a huge cloud of dark smoke. On their port quarter, with even more bow-wash, but with comparatively little smoke, the *Theseus*, shining white in the sun, was cleaving her way towards them, and at the same time

covering herself with signal-bunting for the instruction or interrogation of her consorts.

So intent were the officers upon watching their would-be rescuers, that they did not remark the absence from the deck of one of their number—Lieutenant Dicker, of the Lusatian navy. He had managed to lay hands on and secrete a marling-spike, and, with this concealed in his sleeve, he was making a devoted attempt to find his way to the engine-room, determined, if possible, to do some damage which should have the effect of delaying the ship, and enabling the pursuers to come up with her.

But the Americans were watchful. Dicker could not get into the engine-room without passing a man who was on guard at the top of the ladder leading to it; and the mere presence of the Lusatian in that part of the ship caused him to be seized. He made a gallant but useless resistance; he was quickly pinioned and searched; the marling-spike was found upon him; and, his object being thus made evident, he was put in irons, dragged on deck with much roughness and no little ignominy, and taken to the foot of the bridge-ladder. His struggles below, the exclamations of his captors, and his unwilling appearance in custody attracted the attention not only of Snaggs and Rawlins, who, at such a moment were naturally on the look-out for anything that might imperil the success of their plans, but also of the Emperor and his suite, who, turning their backs for a moment upon the war-ships, crowded round the ladder, indignant at the manner in which the lieutenant was being treated.

'What has he been up to?' asked Colonel Snaggs from the bridge.

'He wanted to jam this spike into the machinery,' replied one of Dicker's guardians, as he held aloft the *corpus delicti*.

'Overboard with him!' cried Snaggs laconically. 'I said I didn't want to have any unpleasantness; but if there's got to be unpleasantness, why, I guess I can play the game as good as anyone.'

The Field-Marshal and the Admiral looked anxiously at the Emperor, who for an instant forgot his self-restraint and the hopelessness of his position, and, rather by gesture than by words, ordered his followers to close about the lieutenant; but the Lusatians were at once steadily thrust back by an overpowering body of Americans, and, the people on the bridge having with great promptitude pulled out their revolvers, the Emperor, motioning away his officers, advanced alone, and, addressing Snaggs, said with obvious emotion:

'We cannot resist. If you will liberate Lieutenant Dicker, I will guarantee his future behaviour.'

'Indeed!' returned Snaggs with mock politeness. 'The offer comes rather too late. The trouble is not of my makin', but of his. I don't want to be unreasonable, though. After what I said the other day he deserves to be shot or drowned. But I'll tell you what I'll do. These ships are goin' to put us in a precious tight place. I was thinkin' of droppin' him overboard as he is. I'll give him a life-buoy, and I'll stick a flag on it. Then the chances are that he'll be picked up; and, maybe,

while your friends are pickin' him up, they will give us time to get away. That's what I'll do.'

We know that in Russia people pursued by a pack of wolves have flung even their own children one by one to the howling brutes to stay them on their course; and, if the instinct of self-preservation can be so strong as to cause a woman to sacrifice the infant from her breast, it is not difficult to find an excuse for Snaggs's determination to fling an active and declared enemy as a sop to the chasing ships. There would, of course, be much risk. Dicker, although provided with a life-buoy, might be sucked under by the *Philistia's* screws, or he might be injured in falling, or he might be run down, or he might not be seen by the rescuers; but upon the whole, and looking to the adverse circumstances of the case, the general feeling was that the lieutenant's sentence was more favourable than might have been expected. At any rate, there being no appeal, it had to be accepted, and on both sides preparations were made accordingly.

The Emperor at once thought of the numerous letters and despatches which he had written since he had been at sea, and sent an officer to demand that they might be entrusted to Dicker; but Snaggs returned a curt and uncompromising refusal. Nor was any conversation to be permitted between the prisoner and any of the Lusatian officers. This prohibition, which the Emperor had not anticipated, for a moment confounded him. He knew that if the lieutenant should be rescued, while still completely ignorant of the plot of the comedy which was being acted at Sandburg, grave evils might result.

Von Dalhoff might play his part so long as he was not suspected of playing one which was not his own; but if it were so much as once authoritatively suggested that Von Dalhoff was not really what he appeared to be, inquiry would be inevitable, and discovery almost certain.

Happily, neither the Emperor nor his companions were required to quit the deck. Snaggs hoped that if they were seen there his pursuers would be chary of firing at him. He intended, also, that they should witness the throwing overboard of Dicker; and as, although the Lusatians were prevented from holding converse with the lieutenant, they were not prevented from standing within a few yards of him, the Emperor presently, by the simple expedient of pretending to talk to Admiral Spott in Russian—a language which the Admiral did not understand a word of, but with which Dicker was familiar—contrived to convey to the astonished prisoner a general outline of the situation, and some details of the arrangement under which Von Dalhoff and the Princess Nannette were acting. An almost imperceptible movement of Dicker's eyebrows was sufficient to indicate that he had understood, and the Emperor, with his mind relieved from a most oppressive weight, was soon again watching the warships, and wondering whether, after all, he might not be able to carry home his own messages.

For, in truth, the position of affairs was beginning to look very disadvantageous for the Americans. The *Chriemhild* was by this time on the *Philistia's* starboard bow, at a distance of less than two miles; the *Theseus*

was a little abaft of the *Philistia's* port beam, at about the same distance, and each was steaming fast, though not quite so fast as the Cunarder. Snaggs's captain, therefore, altered course so as to bring the *Chriemhild* nearly on his starboard beam, and so as to take a direction that would lead him across the bows of the *Theseus*, and Snaggs himself, having hastily taken off Dicker's irons, seen that he was tied into a life-buoy, and caused a boat-flag on a short staff to be lashed to the buoy, led the lieutenant to the port gangway and bid him jump.

Dicker, who had long since come to the conclusion that, unless he could disable the ex-Cunarder, he was perfectly useless on board, had learnt without much regret that he was to be jettisoned in order to be picked up by one of the men-of-war. The first sentence, that he should be flung then and there into the sea, had been loyally accepted by him as the natural penalty for his failure; and if he resented it it was chiefly because it cost him the reflection that never again would he see a certain blue-eyed Gretchen, who was the daughter of an innkeeper at Friedenhaven, and whom, though he was very fond of, he had, if the fact must be told, treated rather badly. The second sentence rejoiced him, for not only would it end his captivity, but, if he had ordinary luck, it would positively hasten the coming of the day on which he should once more meet that same Gretchen, and resume the stuffing of her foolish little head with promises, the performance of which he probably never contemplated even in his most ardent moments. Yet, when he looked down from the *Philistia's* port gangway, and saw

the white surge twenty feet below flying from the ship's side at a speed of about twenty miles an hour, he felt for a moment that he could very well wait, if necessary, for another year to see the innkeeper's daughter, and that, after all, life in the ex-Cunarder was not unbearable.

He thought much and many things; nevertheless, he jumped without apparent hesitation, for although Gretchen's eyes were not upon him, the Emperor's were, and that was still more important to the Lusatian officer.

He fell on the skirts of the wave that was made by the ship in her course. This turned him over and buffeted him for an instant, and then threw him aside into smooth water and left him to right himself. He did so without great difficulty, blew the salt water out of his mouth and rubbed it out of his eyes; and when he next saw the ship, which he had so unceremoniously left, he was a good cable's length astern of her, and was eddying in the midst of the great bursting bubbles that had been churned up from the depths by her propellers.

His friends saw that he had escaped the chief dangers of his sentence. He had not been struck, and he had not been caught by the screws; and as his bright little flag, though wet and heavy, made a good show on the water, there was every probability that he would be seen and picked up by the *Theseus*. But for some time the British cruiser seemed to have no eyes for anything save for the Cunarder. She held on a course which, if persisted in for another mile and a half, threatened to bring

her into actual collision with the *Philistia*. At last, however, she saw the flag and the buoy on her starboard beam. Possibly the British captain came to the conclusion that it was at least the Field-Marshal who had been jettisoned, for he ported his helm immediately, and as he swung round to starboard and showed his long white broadside to the Americans, he fired every one of his port guns at the pirate.

It was a fearful salvo, for almost every projectile worked some sort of damage. That no one was killed is astonishing, for nearly everyone on deck, the Lusatians and the Emperor himself not excluded, had at least one narrow escape. That only two persons were actually wounded is even more to be wondered at, and is only to be explained by the fact that, owing to the small resistance which they encountered, none of the shells burst. They merely passed through whatever happened to stand in their way; and thus, although there were ugly holes and heaps of splinters, and although the look of the ship's upperworks was somewhat spoilt, no serious harm was done, either to the vessel or to those in her.

In the meantime the *Theseus* slowed and lowered a boat, and then resumed the chase; but Snaggs's expedient had gained him the precious five minutes which were all he wanted. He had now the *Chriemhild* on his starboard beam and the *Theseus* right astern of him, and he knew well that in that position, unless an unlucky shot should hit him in a vital place, he was able, not only to hold his own, but to forge ahead.

The *Chriemhild* fired several single shots, but although

two of them struck, very little further damage was done, and after a three hours' exciting chase the pursuers, still doing their best and still firing occasionally, were fairly distanced, and the *Philistia* was safe.

But she dared not even then alter course. She kept on at full speed to the north-west until the others were hull down and the long lights of sunset streamed across the ocean. Only after dark did she venture to turn to the north-east, in order to get back little by little to the longitude of Sala-y-Gomez, the candle around which, moth-like, she was fascinated to circle. For was not the treasure of twenty-five millions of dollars on that lonely island, and must it not be taken off ere Colonel Snaggs, Mr. Rawlins and their friends could have the satisfaction of feeling that they had schemed and ventured to good purpose?

During the three following days the *Philistia* made a long and uneventful detour. She had quitted the island region of the Pacific, and was also out of the usual track of ships, so that neither land nor sail was sighted. On the early morning of the fourth day Snaggs approached Sala-y-Gomez very cautiously from the north-east. He did not want to be again entrapped. Any suspicious ship in the neighbourhood of the island should, he determined, be a signal to him to alter course sixteen points and to steam away at full speed. But he drew nearer and nearer, until every part of the island was distinctly visible. There was nothing to give rise to the slightest misgiving. Not a sail, not even a boat, was to be seen, and nowhere on the wide horizon was there the

faintest trace of smoke. Nevertheless, to make assurance doubly sure, he steamed round the ocean rock, and examined its shores carefully with his most powerful glass. Nothing living except the gulls was, he was convinced, upon the desolate spot; and at last, keeping the ship under way, and with plenty of steam ready and a good look-out set, he ordered out the boats.

The procedure to be observed on landing had been settled long beforehand. Snaggs himself went ashore in general command. Each boat was under the orders of a shareholding member of the conspiracy, who, alone of the boat's crew, was armed. Slings, by means of which the heavy chests could be carried on the shoulders of six men, had been especially prepared; and sling-drill, with dummy chests, having been regularly practised on board, there was every probability that, though two hundred chests were to be dealt with, all could be got alongside and on board during daylight. In fact, Snaggs had calculated that, if he were left undisturbed during four or five hours of fine weather, he could easily complete his task in that time. Crowbars, jacks, and tackle of various kinds had also been ordered to be taken ashore; and, without undue delay, the little procession of boats, in more or less regular formation, pulled briskly to the rocky beach on the south-west side.

Snaggs, revolver in hand, landed at first alone, and ordered his friends to wait while he went forward to examine the ground. He scrambled over the boulders and disappeared; but presently he appeared again near the highest point, and, waving his arms, shouted:

FINDING THE DOLMEN.

'All right, boys; it's all here safe enough. Come along and fetch it!' And, in the excitement of the moment, he emptied his revolver into the air, after the joyous fashion of the western cow-boy, when, on the occasion of one of his rare outbursts, he prepares to 'paint the town red.'

But he did not forget to load his revolver again, and to keep it in his hand, when, having beckoned up his rough followers, he showed them, neatly stowed in the prescribed hollow, the stipulated two hundred iron-bound chests, upon each of which was branded a number, and, in Gothic characters, the suggestive inscription:

'H : Lausitz : Reg.—M. 500,000. Gold.'

'There it is!' he exclaimed triumphantly. 'I knew that we should pull off this thing. I knew that a live Emperor and suite would be considered dirt cheap at our price. Get the stuff on board, boys! Be smart! Me and my friends won't be mean over this job, I reckon. Get it on board!'

And, taking up a position from which, while superintending the operations on shore, he could also keep an eye on the ship, he tucked his revolver under his arm and lighted a cigar. That was the proudest moment which Colonel the Hon. Barnwell Snaggs had so far experienced.

CHAPTER IX.

COLONEL SNAGGS'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE taking off of the chests was not quite so speedy an operation as had been anticipated, for, though they were stacked within a hundred and fifty yards of the boats, they had to be carried over some very broken ground, and their weight rendered them difficult to handle. But after six hours' work in a very hot sun, Snaggs had them all afloat and alongside the *Philistia*.

Rawlins, who had been left in general charge, was on the bridge. The Lusatian officers, on deck aft, had not ceased to watch the proceedings on shore.

The Emperor, as soon as he had learnt of the discovery of the chests, had been unable to conceal from Count Stark his disappointment over what he considered to be Von Dalhoff's pusillanimity in submitting to the terms of the conspirators; and he was still more disappointed when he perceived that the chests were being removed without any interference on the part of the men-of-war, which he felt sure must be in the immediate neighbourhood of the island.

'I shall be almost ashamed to go back,' he declared to

the Field-Marshal, 'feeling that I have cost my country all this gold, and that the money, instead of having benefited the empire, has gone to enrich a score of unscrupulous American adventurers.'

'It may benefit the empire also,' returned the loyal old soldier. 'Your Majesty values the usefulness of an energetic monarch at too low a price. I cannot deem it dear at even a hundred millions of marks, and I venture to believe that if Lusatia were asked to pay twice as much for its Emperor's safety it would cheerfully do so; for our fatherland has been so happy as never to have had an Emperor whose welfare was not very precious to his people.'

'A man is worth what he can do,' said the Emperor, 'and when he is deprived of his ability to do, he becomes valueless. I am not sure now that I ought to have allowed myself to be taken alive; for this captivity has taken from me not only my ability to do, but also my self-respect. There is no place for useless hands in the world.'

'But you will be useful again, sire; and this enforced inaction is far from having been of your Majesty's seeking.'

'Of my seeking—no. It is not of a man's seeking when he grows old, and, for that reason, useless. Yet it may be very logical conduct on the part of certain savage tribes to put such old and useless men out of the way.'

'I am an old enough man, sire, to tell you that you are too despondent. You are on the eve now, let us hope, of your liberation. A month or two may see you

back in Sandburg. You will resume your old interests and habits, and this experience will then soon appear to you like a bad dream, or a past illness.'

Snaggs, who was still superintending the work in the boats, and who caught sight of the Emperor on deck, hailed him with vulgar good humour.

'Your people have stumped up like gentlemen, Emperor,' he cried. 'There's nothing left to be done but to fix up for you a comfortable passage home, and to send you along with our blessing.'

The Emperor walked across the deck to the other side.

'That man seems to treat the matter as a joke,' he said bitterly. 'I hope I shall never forget Mr. Hoodlum's kindness in having knocked him down. I shall certainly always envy Mr. Hoodlum.'

One by one the heavy square cases were hoisted on deck and carefully lowered down thence to the treasure-room, with which, like all Atlantic steamers, the *Philistia* was provided. Rawlins checked and took the number of each of them as it passed him, and another man at the door of the treasure-room did the same. More than a hundred had been got in-board, when the look-out aloft reported that a sail was in sight to the southward; and, as on the occasion of the ex-Cunarder's previous visit, this announcement was quickly followed by further reports of a similar nature.

Within half an hour, indeed, five ships, all of which were evidently men-of-war, were visible in various quarters, and it became clear that the withdrawal of the

cruisers had by no means signified their final abandonment of their object.

Such boats as had already been unloaded were hastily hoisted in: every possible effort was made to unload and hoist up the rest; and Snaggs himself, in a fever of uneasiness, made shift to go aloft in order to see how his pursuers were approaching him. That they were acting in deliberate concert could scarcely be doubted, otherwise they would hardly have all remained out of sight long enough to allow of the chests being got off, nor would they have all reappeared so nearly simultaneously; and these signs of concerted action were not the only considerations that inspired Snaggs with misapprehension.

'If,' he asked himself, 'the Lusatians have made up their minds to ransom their Emperor, and for that object have put the money on the island, why do they renew their pursuit of me even before I have had an opportunity of performing my part of the contract by releasing my hostages? Why do they not, at least, give me time to land my prisoners? Are they not afraid that by their present conduct they may induce me to take a desperate course; perhaps even to serve their Emperor as I served Lieutenant Dicker, though under less advantageous circumstances; and, having got their money, to keep it?'

To these questions he could suggest no answer that seemed to be at all satisfactory; and, with them still puzzling him, he passingly regretted, almost as soon as he had uttered it, having given the order to go ahead

slowly to the westward, that being the quarter from which he seemed to be least threatened. He regretted it because it occurred to him for an instant that it would not be a bad plan to leave the Emperor and suite on Sala-y-Gomez. But presently, when he looked again at the ships which were gathering about him, he came to the conclusion that the proper time for parting with his hostages had not yet arrived. He, in his own opinion, was not being fairly treated, and it might be advisable for him to retaliate by breaking his part of the contract. It would, at all events, be wise to keep in his own hands for as long as possible the power to break it, for he had no mind to let his enemies laugh last.

Several boats laden with chests were still alongside, moving slowly through the water with the ship; but one after another, and with great risk, they were hoisted up to the davits, some after and others before they had been emptied; and although several of them were much knocked about in the process, all were at length unloaded and stowed, and, ere the work had been completed, 'full speed ahead' had been signalled from the bridge to the engine-room, and the *Philistia* was once more travelling at the only pace which seemed natural to her.

There was but another hour of daylight. Two of the pursuers were many miles astern, still almost hull down, two more were to the southward on the port beam, distant about four and six miles respectively, and the fifth was on the starboard quarter, distant about four miles. All were far enough away to be easily shaken off during the night; but if the nearest ones of them

had been allowed to approach a very little nearer they might have made themselves dangerous, and, with the chests under his feet, danger of any unnecessary kind was the last thing that Snaggs was just then anxious to challenge. Indeed, he was possessed of a single-hearted longing to get rid of his prisoners as soon as possible, to land his treasure at some favourable spot, and, having chartered some unsuspecting and unsuspicious trader to carry the ransom quietly to his own land, there to divide it, and to peacefully subside into the enjoyment of his own share of the proceeds of his industry.

But disappointments and perils were yet in store for the Colonel.

The *Philistia* was drawing away in the most satisfactory manner from her pursuers, when, as the sun was setting in a blaze of glory, a cruiser seemed to steam right out of it. She was within a couple of miles of the ex-Cunarder ere she was clearly made out, for the light behind her was almost blinding, and it appeared to wrap her up and shroud her, until she chose to rudely announce herself by firing a shot, which whistled along not fifty feet from the *Philistia's* starboard-side. The pirate was promptly put round to starboard, and then, during the short twilight, there was hot work on both sides. The new-comer was the *Theseus*, with Lieutenant Dicker on board, to give his counsel as to the *Philistia's* most vulnerable points, and with her own officers in no very gentle mood after their previous experience. Yet once more the fates were unpropitious to the British cruiser. One of her steam-pipes burst soon after she

had taken up the chase, and thenceforward, although she was for a time near enough to do considerable damage with her guns, and actually set the ex-Cunarder on fire, she rapidly dropped behind.

The fire was no very great matter, and was easily extinguished, but four men were killed by the bursting shell that caused it, and several people, including one of the Lusatian officers, who was slightly hit in the shoulder, were wounded. No doubt the fact that the *Theseus's* shells this time exploded, even against the small resistance afforded by the *Philistia*, was attributable to modifications made in the fuses at the suggestion of Dicker; and after the experience afforded by the explosion on board of only one of these missiles, Snaggs felt very thankful indeed when the break-down of the cruiser released him from her attentions. The other vessels were fairly out-steamed, and were no more to be feared. A course north-west by west was therefore set, damages were patched up, and the American conspirators, whose dinner had been postponed in deference to the excitement, at length sat down to it in the saloon.

The Americans lived on board, not like lords, but like aldermen. Their table, although they had been nearly three months at sea, was, thanks to refrigerating rooms, French cooks, and unlimited expenditure before leaving port, still sumptuous, and they drank wine such as it would not have been easy to find in the best clubs of New York, and in very few of the best of those in London. That evening they perhaps drank it rather

more freely than usual, for the occasion was a special one; and there was throughout the company a feeling that the day marked an important and culminating point in the history of the expedition. Dinner was barely ended ere someone called upon the Colonel for a speech, and as the Colonel only waited for an opportunity, he obligingly rose amid great and encouraging clicking of glasses.

'Gentlemen,' he said, seizing a dessert-knife with which to emphasize his utterances, and resting his other hand upon the table, 'I kind of believe that this evenin' may be regarded as a turnin'-point in the lives of all of us. We have played for a big game—pretty nearly as big a game as gentlemen like me and you could play for without actually declarin' a war on the old-fashioned and expensive lines—and we have captured a real live Emperor and suite. And right here, before I go any farther, I should like to say straight that that young Emperor, ever since he has been with us, has conducted himself in every way like a real gentleman' (applause). 'I won't go so far as to tell you that he and his friends haven't given us any trouble, but I do allow that, considerin' all things, they have given us mighty little; and you will bear me out when I remind you that in three months and more we have only twice had to draw our guns on the boys, and even then didn't have to shoot. I call that creditable. I call it an honour to that young man's horse sense' (applause). 'Well, not only did we capture that Emperor, but we stuck to him; and not only did we stick to him, but we put a figure on

him. And that figure—it's a respectable one—so far met the views and ran kind of parallel with the feelings of this Emperor's friends to home, that to-day we have taken on board the very ransom we thought it reasonable and just to go for' (applause). 'Gentlemen, I believe we can all sit back and look pleasant over that little deal. But that is not all. This Emperor's friends don't appear to have gotten his correct and gentlemanly ideas about doin' business. Thay have planked down their money, it is true; but they have done it kind of ugly. They gave us scarce enough time to pick it up before they started to go for us all they knew. They didn't pay no attention to undertakin's, and contracts, and bargains—not they! The understandin' was that, having gotten the money, we would peaceably put this Emperor somewheres on shore in a handy place for gettin' home again. We didn't want to go back on our contract—not much! But they don't seem to wish to give us a show. You have seen to-day how they have chased us, instead of lettin' us quietly go away to carry out our bargain. I don't care what they call it; I call it real mean. Gentlemen, you know and I know whether we propose to act straight or not. I say we did propose, and we do propose, to act as straight as a die. But what do they care? Here we are, steamin' with no thought on earth but to take their Emperor to some such handy place as I've been speakin' of; yet not only do they chase us, but they fire into us, and I need not tell you what the unfortunate result of the firin' has been. But, gentlemen, we have gotten clear.

There's nothing on the Pacific to touch the *Philistia*. She can show her heels to any ship on this side; and to-night, as we sit here, we may, I say, congratulate ourselves that, in spite of all difficulties and a good deal of unfriendly feelin', we have pulled off a tarnation big thing; and don't you forget it.'

The Colonel subsided to his seat amid storms of applause; but, immediately rising again, took from his pocket a key, and, having brandished it for an instant, resumed:

'There's no great cause for me to apologise to you, gentlemen, if in the natural enthusiasm of the occasion I have forgotten for a moment to mention a little business topic which I had in my mind when I first began. I have reminded you that to-day we have taken on board a pretty considerable amount of gold. It ought to be, and I guess it is, twenty-five million dollars. I have reminded you, too, that we are goin' right now to perform our part of the contract, and to put this Emperor ashore in some handy place. But business is business, gentlemen, and before we actually do perform our part of the contract, it is only reasonable that we should make sure that the other parties have performed theirs' (applause). 'Now this key is one of the keys of the treasure-room. My friend Mr. Rawlins has the other key. In that treasure-room there are two hundred chests, and each one of those chests ought to hold exactly a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in gold coin. Now we are bound, as business men, to know whether we have gotten properly paid or not; and

until we do know, it would be blamed foolish of us to let this Emperor quit. I don't doubt that we have gotten the money, but I guess we'll see. I guess we'll choose one of those chests at hazard—for every one is numbered—and will have that one in, and have it opened right here as a sample for our satisfaction. If it's full weight and full number, we shall have no call to feel uneasy about the rest. Will some gentleman name a number?'

'Eight,' shouted a man promptly from the other end of the table.

'Another,' said Snaggs.

'Three,' cried a second man.

'Eight and three,' continued the Colonel. 'Now, shall we have in number eighty-three or number thirty-eight? It don't signify. You'd best decide it for yourselves, and then, I guess, you'll all be satisfied. Hands up for eighty-three, gentlemen.'

Two or three hands only were held up.

Snaggs looked round and counted.

'Well, who says thirty-eight?' he asked.

The hands of most of the company voted for thirty-eight; and chest number thirty-eight, being thus selected for examination, was ordered to be brought from the treasure-room, whither Snaggs and Rawlins, accompanied by most of their friends, went in order to open the iron-plated door.

In ten minutes the heavy box was found, carried to the saloon, and hoisted on to a vacant table; and the ship's carpenter and a pair of scales having been sent for, Snaggs utilized the interval by making certain cal-

culations on a piece of paper, and then announcing to the crowd of conspirators:

'Gentlemen, a ten-dollar gold piece, United States currency, weighs 258 grains. I guess the contents of this box, representing 125,000 dollars, have got to weigh 12,500 times 258 grains; that is 3,225,000 grains, or 559 lb. 10 oz. 15 dwt. Troy, which in Avoirdupois equals 460½ lb. It won't weigh much less, you bet.'

Few people realize that a cubic inch of pure gold weighs upwards of eleven ounces, and that a cubic foot of pure gold weighs a good deal more than half a ton; and most of those present were somewhat astonished to learn that each of the little boxes, not measuring exteriorly much more than a foot each way, was capable of containing not only a small fortune in gold coin, with all its inevitable waste of space, but also the necessary packing.

'Is it dollars, marks, sovereigns or francs?' asked someone while the carpenter was plying his screwdriver. 'Say, wait there, till we get up a little pool on the subject.'

And as the suggestion pleased the gambling inclinations of the conspirators, the carpenter was bidden to suspend his work while a sweepstakes at a hundred dollars a share was hastily organized. Pieces of paper bearing respectively the words dollars, marks, sovereigns, francs, florins, pesetas, guilders, etc., were folded up, thrown into a hat, and drawn forth one by one by the carpenter as each contributor's name was called; and even then the man was not allowed to proceed until each paper

had been put up to auction and sold for what it would fetch, half the profits of the sale going to the original proprietor and the other half to the prize fund. These 'selling pools' are a favourite form of gambling among all Americans who travel; and the very atmosphere and associations of an Atlantic liner, in spite of the fact that she was in the Pacific and not in the Atlantic, were in themselves almost sufficient to engender such a characteristic episode as preceded the opening of the first chest.

At last, the auction ended, the carpenter was at liberty to complete his work. He took out the already loosened screws, lifted off a substantial lid, and disclosed, not an array of bright gold pieces, but a mass of newspapers.

'Take them off!' shouted someone. 'Let us have a look at the dollars.'

And two or three hands snatched at the papers, which, being removed, laid bare nothing more valuable than a dull block of solid metal, which, on examination, proved to be lead.

From all sides there were loud cries of indignation.

'They've seen you and gone better, Snaggs,' exclaimed one.

'I never thought they'd have been such all-fired idiots as to plank down,' declared another.

'Sold!' ejaculated a third; 'sold, by gosh!'

But Snaggs was still a little hopeful.

'I guess the gold is packed in lead,' he suggested. 'Fetch an axe!'

An axe was brought, and Snaggs, who had caused the block to be turned out of the box, at the bottom and sides of which there were more newspapers, smote down into the lead with all his force, and, having wrenched the axe free again, smote down a second time, and smashed the table by the vigour of the blow.

Once more the axe was wrenched free, and the two cleavages were carefully examined by the light of lamps which were held for the purpose; but the only possible conclusion was that the block was of solid lead, and this conclusion was fully borne out when the block was carefully measured and weighed. The block, by measurement, contained about 1,120 cubic inches, and weighed, as such a block of nearly pure lead ought to weigh, about 460 pounds.

The Hon. Barnwell Snaggs was in a cold perspiration.

'I tell you what it is, boys,' he stammered out at last. 'They calculated that we should open box number one, and, findin' gold there, or at least in the first two or three, should rest satisfied and not worry about the rest until after we had set free the prisoners. They've not been playin' fair. That's where the trouble is. And we've been mighty lucky in comin' down upon their little game in plenty of time to bust it up. What I say is the fact, you bet. We shall strike gold in number one.'

'If we strike it in the first five there won't be enough to pay the cost of this little trip,' objected a conspirator who was now less sanguine than the Colonel, and who had invested his all in the venture.

'It don't matter a cent either way,' said Snaggs. 'We've still got the Emperor, and he's as good for the money as ever he was, or even for more. My idea is that after this bit of bluff we ought to double the price. But let us have along number one.'

He led the way again to the treasure-room, and number one, having been found, was carried into the saloon, and opened, without, however, the previous formality of getting up a 'selling pool' on its contents. But number one was in all respects as number thirty-eight had been; and so were numbers two, three, and four, as well as numbers one hundred and two hundred, both of which were subsequently broached. Each contained merely newspapers and a block of lead.

'Well, I am busted!' was a very general exclamation throughout the saloon, as the successive boxes were opened; and when the evening's researches were at length relinquished, a feeling of almost hopeless depression settled down upon nearly every man present.

'But we'll have the dollars yet,' declared the Colonel savagely, 'or my name ain't Barnwell Snaggs. We'll have them if we have to torture that young Emperor first. I ain't a hard nor a cruel man by nature. I hate unpleasantness, and I like to act squarely and to be squarely acted by. But, great Scott! I'm not goin' to be buncoed in this way. Not much! I'm goin' to go through with this, and there's got to be no more nonsense.'

'We haven't coal to last for many weeks more,' objected Rawlins.

'Nor stores,' added another.

'No matter,' returned Snaggs; 'we must turn pirates, if need be. We'll see who can hold out the longest. There's plenty of coal afloat in the Pacific, and plenty of stores. We can catch any mail steamer in this part of the ocean; and although the only guns we have on board are those remarkable guns of Major Bolter, we can fire them if we want to; and we've all got our six-shooters, I believe, and know how to use them.'

A very qualified adherence was given to these radical proposals. The Americans were terribly dejected, and most of them were, besides, weary of the long stay at sea, and more than doubtful whether any good could now be got out of the cruise.

'I believe we had best sleep over the matter before we conclude anything,' said Rawlins, as, having lighted a cigar, he stretched himself at full length on a sofa, and lazily picked up one of the scattered newspapers from the floor. 'Wonder what the world's been doing without us. Wonder how stocks are in N'York. Wonder how Sandburg is feeling without its Emperor. Wonder how the fall elections went at home.'

And he began to glance through the paper, which happened to be a copy of the *Times* of the end of November. Many others followed his example; for the saloon was littered with papers of nearly all dates between the second week in October and the end of the first week in December, and among them, in addition to the *Times*, were the New York *World* and *Herald*, the French *Temps*, *Débats*, and *Figaro*, the *Indépendance Belge*, the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the *Neue Freie Presse*, the

Correspondencia of Madrid, the *Tribuna* of Rome, several Sandburg periodicals, and one or two illustrated papers from various capitals. The American who has been kept from a newspaper of any kind for upwards of three months can at a pinch find something to interest him in journals two months old, even though they be printed in a language of which he knows nothing.

'Thunder!' exclaimed Rawlins, suddenly springing to an erect position, and glaring at the *Times* as if he were spell-bound by what he saw there. 'This whips creation!'

'What's that?' demanded Snaggs, who, instead of reading, had been gazing moodily at one of the blocks of lead.

'Why, listen here,' said Rawlins. 'This is the London *Times*, dated November 27th last. I'm going to read a cablegram dated Sandburg, November 26th. What do you say to it?' And he read: '"This afternoon the Emperor, who was accompanied by the Princess Nannette, drove, escorted by a squadron of hussars, to the village of Dümpling, about five miles from Sandburg, and there formally opened the new works which are to supply the capital with water. His Majesty, who looked extremely well, conversed for some minutes before the ceremony with Herr von Stumm, the engineer under whose superintendence the waterworks have been constructed, and afterwards conferred upon him the Order of the Purple Eagle of the first class. From Dümpling the Princess drove back to the royal palace; but the Emperor, taking the train, proceeded with his suite to

Hasenstein, where he was the guest of the officers of the garrison, who also entertained General Baron Schenck, commander of the 13th Army Corps, the Imperial Chancellor, the Chief of the General Staff, his Highness the Grand Duke of Taxis, and other distinguished personages. After dinner the Emperor, who proposed the toast of the 13th Army Corps, of which the Hasenstein garrison forms part, made one of his characteristic speeches. At midnight his Majesty returned by special train to Sandburg."'

Snaggs walked over to Rawlins, snappishly took the paper from him, and carefully examined it.

'There's something wrong here,' he said. 'We know there's something wrong; because we know that their Emperor wasn't at Sandburg, nor within many thousand miles of it, on November 26th.'

Everyone else looked at the paper, and agreed that there must be something wrong.

'These British newspapers,' Snaggs explained, 'ain't usually built that way; yet I guess there ain't many things in this world that money won't buy. They must have planked down a mighty big sum, though, to quiet the London *Times*. It's curious.'

'It is curious,' said a man who had been glancing at the *Débats*; 'for the Paris papers have stories of the same kind. Here is a despatch—I'll translate it as well as I can as I go along—to the Paris *Journal des Débats*, dated from Sandburg on October 18th—that is, ten days after we left Friedenhaven. "The Emperor's marriage," it says, "is now understood to be indefinitely postponed,

not because of any lack of personal sympathy between the high contracting parties, but on political grounds. It is said that the Duke of Stormarn has put forward certain demands relative to the abrogation of his mediatization, and that the Imperial Government objects to grant them. In the meanwhile, the charming young Princess Griselda has taken a high patriotic attitude, and, it is rumoured, absolutely refuses to be married except as the daughter of a reigning prince. At the same time, it is but just to add that, apart from this serious disagreement, the relations between the Emperor and his betrothed remain perfectly cordial, and there is every prospect that the difficulty will ultimately be arranged."'

'And here's something else!' cried another man, who had the New York *World*, and who read from its column of European Court gossip: '"It appears that the recent rumour to the effect that the Lusatian Emperor had been kidnapped had a certain amount of basis. A scheme to kidnap him had been gotten up by some people who are said to be American citizens, and who had chartered the Cunarder *Philistia* for the purpose; but the Emperor was warned of his danger by an American friend, Mr. Esek Hoodlum, who, at great personal risk, brought his Majesty ashore in a small sailing canoe in the nick of time. Our spirited but piratical fellow-citizens did, however, get clear away with several officers and high officials, including Field-Marshal Count Stark and Admiral Spott, and they have signified their intention of holding these gentlemen to

ransom. A sum of a hundred millions of dollars is said to be demanded for them, and it is threatened that, in case of non-payment, the hostages will be shot. Details of the affair are shrouded in the usual Lusatian veil of official secrecy, but enough speedily became known to cause very widespread excitement; the consequence being that when, on the evening of his return to Sandburg, the Emperor, with his sister, the Princess Nannette, appeared at the opera, he received a striking ovation, the entire audience rising and cheering him for several minutes. It is understood that measures of an international character are being taken to pursue and capture the kidnappers. It is not likely that the affair will lead to complications, for the most friendly assurances of co-operation in any measures that might be adopted for the punishment of the offenders were at once offered by the United States Minister in Sandburg, and he was specifically ordered by cable from Washington to convey from the President to the Emperor the former's official and personal congratulations upon the latter's providential escape. It is not yet known in what direction the *Philistia* has gone, but she is supposed to be cruising somewhere in the Atlantic. Her capture is, of course, only an affair of time. The Emperor, it is satisfactory to be able to add, is none the worse for his adventure, and has ever since been as active and as energetic as usual. This week he has already enjoyed two days' shooting with the Prince of Hohenstoff, has alarmed the garrisons of Kurm and Delling, has presided at the dinner of the Estates of the Province of South Ruhland,

has presented new colours to the Uhlans of the Guard, has appeared at the Russian Ambassador's ball, and has paid a flying visit to Diel, where he has launched a new ironclad."'

Snaggs listened aghast, yet still half incredulous, to all this and to many other extracts which were found and read. Everything seemed to be slipping away from him. He was, as it were, in a dream.

'It's a great conspiracy,' he stammered.

'I guess they can't get up conspiracies of that kind. The Emperor's there,' said a man who up to that time had not spoken, 'or he's here. We believe that he's here. It appears to me that all the rest of the world—including his subjects, the Lusatian princes, the Lusatian army, the Lusatian navy, and even his own sister and sweetheart—believes that he's right there in Sandburg. I'm no scholar, but I take it that the mathematical chances are about five hundred millions of dollars to a red cent that the rest of the world is correct, and that every soul in this confounded floating purgatory is no better than a fool. If I may be so bold as to suggest a single likely exception to the general rule, I'll name that young man whom the Colonel takes to be the Emperor. That young man ain't no fool, maybe; but there ain't the most distant shadow of the ghost of a doubt but what he's a first-class knave. We're no great shakes at recognising kings and emperors when we see them. It appears to me that an emperor must look pretty much like any other man, so long as he forgets to walk about with his crown on. But these Lusatian gentlemen on

board are not like us pure and simple Republicans. They pretend, I reckon, to know an emperor by the cut of his face, or the tone of his voice, or the colour of his hair, or something kind of indescribable about his sacred person; and these Lusatian gentlemen, including the old Field-Marshal, who have all had experience in detecting emperors, allow that this young man is the Emperor. And that's why I wish to point out that the young man's a mighty lot cleverer than the rest of us.'

These sentiments so fairly stated the probabilities that Snaggs's incredulity began to vanish.

'I don't see how the swindle can have been worked, though,' he ventured.

'I don't suppose that any of us see,' continued the man. 'That's where our foolishness comes in. Maybe some of us 'll see by to-morrow morning. We've been celebrating our success to-night. The success is a matter of question: the celebration is a trying fact. There's been too much wine flying around. I guess we'd best think kind of carefully over our position.'

'It appears to me you're about right,' said Snaggs, whose mind was reduced to chaos by the prospect of the collapse of all his schemes. 'I believe that we're dreamin'. We've dreamt the lead, we've dreamt the newspapers, we've dreamt that the Emperor's safe in Lusatia. One more glass, boys, to a happy wakin' to-morrow!'

And with a hand that was rendered unsteady as much by excitement as by wine, he filled a tumbler with champagne, tossed it off, and staggered to his cabin, where he flung himself, as he was, into his berth.

CHAPTER X.

ADRIFT.

THE morning of January 28th was fine and calm, and the Emperor, in accordance with his invariable custom, was early on deck. He always spent there an hour or two with his suite before going to breakfast, and after breakfast his practice was to work in his cabin until luncheon-time. During the long period of his captivity those solitary forenoons were well occupied. The Emperor elaborated a great number of schemes of social, financial, naval and military reform, for the consideration of which, had he been at home in Sandburg, he would have found it almost impossible to snatch leisure. In the afternoon he again walked on deck for a couple of hours, resuming work in his cabin at about half-past three o'clock, and remaining there until dinner was served. He dined in his fore-cabin, usually with two specially-invited officers; and after dinner the cabin assumed the appearance of the anteroom of a military mess, for, for the rest of the evening, it was free to the whole suite. The Emperor talked, played whist or chess, or—for he was an excellent musician, and there was a good piano—took part

in an impromptu smoking concert, at which those who were able to do so played or sang, and the others recited, or told stories. The songs were chiefly the simple old folk songs of Lusatia, which all Lusatians love, and which recalled to those unwilling wanderers on the ocean dear memories of home; and at half-past ten the rising of the Emperor to enter his inner cabin was the signal for the Lusatian national hymn to be sung in harmony by all standing. After which everyone turned in.

But on the morning of January 28th, when the Emperor went on deck to join his suite, the conversation was not of the usual character.

The Emperor's American-Lusatian servant, Otto Hengler, had long since become devotedly attached to his imperial master. He had been in and out of the saloon late on the previous evening, and, having there picked up some Sandburg papers, had taken them to his master's cabin. There the Emperor found them when he rose in the morning, and, while he was dressing, he learnt from Otto the whole story of the disappointment of the conspirators in the matter of the chests.

It is not difficult to enter into the eagerness with which the Emperor devoured the news from his capital, or to imagine the satisfaction with which he saw how prudently and successfully Von Dalhoff and the Princess Nannette had been working for him during his absence. He realized, however, that the extraordinary nature of the intelligence from Europe must have greatly alarmed the Americans, and, while it could not but cause them to make inquiries, might probably bring about a radical

change in their attitude towards him. As soon, therefore, as he went on deck, he showed the papers to Count Stark, who alone was up to that moment completely in his confidence, and having taken the Field-Marshal's opinion, sanctioned the communication to the rest of the suite of the true explanation of the state of affairs in Lusatia. He recommended them when questioned, as they surely would be, to say, as in truth they might, that they believed him to be the Emperor, but that certainly the reports from Sandburg and elsewhere might be sufficient to create doubts in the minds of some people; and they were urged not to be unnecessarily positive in their identification of him.

'I am not without hope,' the Emperor added to Count Stark, 'that these reports may convince the pirates that they have made an inexplicable error—or, at least, that they may force the Americans to the conclusion that, even if I be the Emperor, the false Emperor is now so firmly seated and so fully recognised that there is no probability either of my being ransomed or of my being restored.'

The Field-Marshal conveyed these instructions to the suite, and had barely made the situation clear to all of them when Colonel Snaggs came on deck.

Snaggs had refreshed his memory by glancing again at some of the papers in the saloon, and had refreshed himself by drinking an early glass of champagne. He walked straight up to the Emperor, and, barring his Majesty's way, said abruptly:

'So I guess you're only a fraud after all.'

'If you have anything to say,' returned the Emperor, as he quietly turned, 'say it, if you please, to Field-Marshal Count Stark, my aide-de-camp.'

The American, pale with passion, stretched forth his hand to detain the Emperor and make him listen, but, as the Lusatian officers had all been narrowly watching him, he was not allowed to do as he intended. A great yellow-bearded cavalry officer, Lieutenant-Colonel von Puppenheim, darted at him like an avalanche, seized him by the shoulder, spun him round, struck him fairly in the face a blow that might have felled an ox, and sent him reeling and half-stunned against the railings.

'No one touches the Emperor!' muttered Von Puppenheim grimly.

Snaggs, who held one hand to his face, felt with the other for his revolver; but again the Lieutenant-Colonel was too quick for him. He seized the American's hand with a grasp that made the joints crack, and in an instant the revolver was taken away by others and was flung overboard.

'Thanks, my dear Von Puppenheim,' said the Emperor; 'I shall not forget this. But you have done enough. Tell the man that if he will speak civilly to Count Stark he shall be listened to.'

Snaggs, who was promptly released, did not wait to say or hear another word, but stumbled down the companion, still holding one hand to his face. Von Puppenheim had broken his jaw; and when the American learnt the nature of his injury from the ship's surgeon, his rage and violence were so extreme, that only

by force was he prevented from providing himself with a fresh pistol, and returning to the deck with the intention, as he almost incoherently expressed it, of 'blowing the whole gang to perdition.'

In the case of Mr. Hoodlum, Agamemnon Rawlins had already figured as a diplomatist. He figured in the same capacity in the still more serious case of Von Puppenheim. As soon as he knew what had occurred, he hurried on deck to Count Stark.

'Beg pardon, your Excellency,' he said, 'but there's going to be trouble over this little business. The Colonel's just mad. That big officer of yours has broken his jaw, and nothing 'll satisfy the Colonel but shooting the man who struck him. I don't say whose fault it was; it don't matter. Nor it isn't only against the man who struck him that the Colonel's mad; he's mad against the hull crowd of you, not forgetting the Emperor, or the gentleman that you call the Emperor. The papers that came on board yesterday prove that the Emperor's really to home the hull time. You've been took in, maybe, as well as us. I don't want to have no more trouble. I'm sick of the show. We've made big enough fools of ourselves already; we shall only make bigger fools of ourselves if we let Snaggs git out and commence shooting. What I say is, "Git!" We'll let you git as smart as you please; then, maybe, we'll have a chance of saving ourselves and gitting clear off.'

'You suggest that we should go,' replied the Field-Marshal; 'but that lies in your hands. We cannot go without your assistance, no matter how much we may

desire to do so; and, as you are responsible for our presence here, it is but just that you should be responsible for putting us suitably ashore.'

'That's so,' assented Rawlins; 'but we can't put you ashore anywheres about here, because there ain't no shore to put you on.'

'Then let us wait until we get to land, of course,' said the Field-Marshal.

'See here, Excellency,' explained Rawlins, 'it ain't only Snaggs I'm afraid of; some of the others are just as mad as he is—disappointed at gitting lead instead of gold, and at finding that the real Emperor ain't on board after all. It's as bad a business for me as it is for them. I stand to lose as much as any. But we shall all stand to lose a mighty sight more if the boys git to shooting, and that I won't have if I can prevent it. I'm talking straight to you; I mean what I say. I shan't be able to hold the boys; they're getting uglier and uglier every minute. Say now, Excellency, if we was to give you a boat, the best we have, and stores, and directions, and a chest of tools, and arms if you like, would you feel like gitting? There's a crowd of islands to the westward, and they tell me that the current hereabouts sets that way; so that even if you didn't have the luck to be picked up by one of the men-of-war, you'd be bound to git ashore somewheres. Say, would you feel like gitting?' He asked it almost pleadingly.

'Well, I don't know; but I'll put the matter before his Majesty, if you like.'

'I wish you would, Excellency, right here and right

now, for I can't promise to hold the boys; and if they once commence using their guns, they won't stop till they've done what'll make them considerable sorry when they're cool again.'

Count Stark walked over to the Emperor, and repeated to him all that Rawlins had said. To the old soldier's astonishment—for he was no lover of or truster in the sea—the Emperor was delighted at the idea, and even became immediately enthusiastic about it.

'Anything to regain some portion of our lost liberty,' he said. 'Our brave Dicker would have been a great assistance; but, after all, there is the Admiral, and I myself understand something about boat-sailing. With a roomy and sea-worthy boat, plenty of stores, a few instruments and tools, and some arms, we should have little to fear in this beautiful ocean; and the open-air life in so mild a climate would not harm a child. Why, even you, my dear Count, old as you are, will revel in it.'

Admiral Spott was called into council, and appeared to be almost as pleased as the Emperor. He jotted down a rough list of things that must be supplied, made a suggestion as to the boat to be selected, and the sails and gear to be furnished for it, hinted that the Emperor's servant Hengler might be asked to volunteer to accompany the party, and, upon the whole, took so rosy and yet so practical a view of the project, that the Count, ere he returned to Rawlins, was almost persuaded that existence in an open boat in mid-ocean must really be a very pleasant experience.

'That's good, Excellency,' said Rawlins, when he heard of the Emperor's decision. 'You shall have all you want, you bet, and more too. It's a quarter past eight now. Do you feel like starting at ten?'

Count Stark put the question to the Emperor, whose reply was:

'Certainly, Count; the sooner the better;' and Rawlins, who was very uneasy as to whether he could, even for an hour and three-quarters, be sure of restraining all his friends, went at once to the *Philistia's* captain to consult with him about the making of the necessary preparations. In the meantime the Emperor and his suite went to breakfast.

'I am going to leave the ship at ten o'clock,' said the Emperor to Hengler, who, as usual, attended upon him.

The man opened his eyes wide, and threw half involuntary glances out of the cabin scuttles, as if he expected to see land alongside.

'I'm going in a boat,' continued the Emperor, who noticed Hengler's wonderment. 'Have you ever been in a boat at sea—far out at sea, I mean?'

'No, your Majesty; but I understand how to manage a boat. My father is a fisherman at Suderney.'

'At Suderney? That is one of our Lusatian islands. Why did you leave your fatherland?'

'May it please your Majesty, I was told that in America there were no poor; that everyone could do as he liked; and that——'

'Well, go on, Hengler; what else were you told?'

'May your Majesty forgive me! I was told also that

in America I should not have to help to support any king or emperor.'

'Ah!' said the Emperor with a smile; 'that is, of course, a great advantage. You naturally found that you were much better off.'

'No, your Majesty.'

'But you were not poor?'

'I was as poor as in Lusatia, neither more nor less, your Majesty, for, though I earned higher wages, it cost me more to live.'

'You were more comfortable, nevertheless; for you could do as you liked.'

'Your Majesty, I venture to believe that there is no place in which a poor man is more at the absolute mercy of the rich than in America.'

'At least you had not to support any emperors, kings, or grand dukes.'

'Your Majesty, I had to assist to support millionaires, financiers and monopolists, men who seemed to have no interest in the well-being of the poor who slaved for them, men who thought only of squeezing ever more and more out of the people.'

'So? Then I suppose that you will return to Lusatia, Hengler?'

'How can I, your Majesty?' asked Hengler.

'With me.'

Hengler fell upon his knees, took the Emperor's hands, kissed them, and burst into tears.

'I did not dare to beg your Majesty,' he said, 'to give me permission to go back. I have been here among

your Majesty's enemies, in the pay of these pirates. Your Majesty has told me that it was no place for a loyal Lusatian. But, your Majesty, I am a loyal Lusatian yet. I would lay down my life for your Majesty, now or at any time. My greatest misfortune would be to have to quit your Majesty's service. If your Majesty will graciously deign to take me, I will go anywhere or do anything. For these three months I have been every day ashamed. When I am out of this ship I shall be a man again.'

The Emperor raised his servant kindly.

'Then you will be a man at ten o'clock to-day,' he said; 'and, as for quitting my service, so long as you behave like a man, a true Lusatian man, you shall be my Jäger. There! never mind saying what you want to say. Get my papers together, and a few clothes. I did not bring them, but I shall take them with me. And be quick!'

In the meantime a thirty-two foot pinnace, fitted to carry two sliding gunters, and supplied with all needful gear, provisions, water in barricoes, instruments, and arms, was got ready on the davits, under the supervision of Admiral Spott, the captain of the *Philistia*, and Agamemnon Rawlins. There was some grumbling among the Americans who stood looking on.

'We ought to keep the Lusatians as hostages for our safety, if not for the return of our money,' declared one.

'Better shoot the lot of them,' said another.

But Rawlins made so strong a point of the inutility of

keeping and feeding men who were palpably not worth ransoming; of the obvious fact that sooner or later the captives must be got rid of in some way, and of the evil consequences that must inevitably result from any violence offered to the prisoners, that his friends contented themselves with grumbling, and did not raise any more serious objection when, at a few minutes before ten, the engines were stopped, and, the ship having lost her way, the pinnace was lowered into the water and brought to the lee gangway.

The captain of the *Philistia* marked out the vessel's position on a chart, which he gave to the Admiral. He also gave him a few books, including a 'South Pacific Directory.' One after another the officers were handed down into the boat; Hengler, with the Emperor's very modest luggage, followed, and finally the Emperor and the Field-Marshal descended. The pinnace was shoved off, and the *Philistia*, slowly gathering way again, pursued her course, leaving the boat alone upon the ocean.

It was a sudden departure. Only two hours earlier there had seemed to be no prospect of it. Yet, although the *Philistia* had been the home of the Emperor and his suite for upwards of three months, they experienced no regret at leaving her, in spite of the fact that they were exchanging comfortable quarters for very uncomfortable ones, good beds for hard boards, and well-furnished cabins for the vault of heaven. Each, as he dropped into the boat, felt that he had at last made a step in the direction of home.

In the *Philistia* there may have been regrets—indeed, there must have been; for the disappearance of the prisoners cannot have been for long concealed from Snaggs, who must have been furious when he heard of it. A few hours later, however, even Snaggs may well have been reconciled; for, in such a gale as that which blew on the next night, the most revengeful passions of the Colonel must have been satiated by the reflection that, while he was dry and warm in a giant steamship, which, with all her power, could barely hold her own, those whom he most hated were struggling, only a few miles away, in an open pinnace, with Death, who stretched forth a hundred hands from the darkness around them, and who shrieked terror into the ear of each.

That part of the South Pacific in which the castaways found themselves lies outside the usual region of hurricanes, and is within the limits of the south-east trades at that time of the year. A steady easterly breeze was, in fact, blowing; the weather was fine, and although Easter Island, somewhat to the south-west, was actually the nearest land, the Admiral deemed it safest, upon the whole, to make for the Low Archipelago to the westward; for Easter Island, owing to its solitary position, is little visited, and has very irregular communication with the outside world, while the Low Archipelago, though it also is somewhat remote from the greater highways of commerce, forms the eastern extremity of the vast network of islands and islets that extends thence westward to Australia and the Malay Peninsula. At Easter

Island, in the opinion of the Admiral, the party might be stranded for months; but it could scarcely happen that news of its presence in the Low Archipelago would not speedily reach Tahiti, or some other centre of trade; for the inter-insular traffic is sufficient to disseminate important intelligence pretty rapidly. Moreover, it seemed probable that Lusatian and other cruisers might be more reasonably looked for in that quarter than in the more immediate neighbourhood of Sala-y-Gomez, which could no longer be supposed to offer any attractions to the *Philistia*. As soon, therefore, as sail had been made, the boat was put nearly before the wind, and, at the Emperor's suggestion, those on board were at once formed into two watches, of one of which the Emperor, and of the other the Admiral, took charge.

When order had been established, the Emperor addressed his suite.

'You must have been astonished, gentlemen,' he said, 'when, through my old and dear friend Field-Marshal Count Stark, I intimated to you this morning that, thanks to arrangements which I was happily able to make, our people at home have been kept in ignorance of the fact that I am not still among them. Those arrangements, originally made in order that I might secure for study and necessary relaxation moments which must have been otherwise given to the performance of purely mechanical functions that really benefit no one, will, I trust, have the effect of preserving peace and prosperity in our dear Lusatian fatherland until I am permitted to return thither. The Baron von Dalhoff,

enjoying the advantage of the counsel and clear good sense of my royal sister, the Princess Nannette, will, I am persuaded, serve me and my country well; and although it is not without a feeling of repulsion that I reflect that I have made myself a party to a course which strict ethics may be able to impugn, I do not reproach myself, and I would not, in the circumstances, have it otherwise. If it were known that I am here in the mid-Pacific, instead of at the helm of the State, misfortunes many and great would, I know too well, threaten Lusatia from more than one quarter. So long as I am believed to be at my post, alert and watchful, the Empire will, I hope and pray, have peace. And I am seriously of opinion that—putting strict ethics aside—a deception, which is in itself harmless, may, when it secures the blessings of continued peace to scores of millions of people, be not only justifiable, but a matter of duty. That harmless deception, gentlemen, must be persisted in until I am once more in Sandburg. It will not suffice to persist in it only until it can be announced in Lusatia that I am rescued, and am on my way home. There must be no interval between the moment when the Baron von Dalhoff becomes again himself and the moment when I become again myself. To-day, to-morrow, we may be picked up. It will not do for the true history of our adventures to get home before us. Therefore my will and pleasure is, gentlemen, that from this moment I cease to be the Emperor until I am once more in Sandburg. The Baron von Dalhoff has taken my place, and left a vacant personality. I intend to

take that personality, and to be to all of you the Baron von Dalhoff, and none other, so long as I remain away from my post.'

This new arrangement was a convenient and almost a necessary one. In an open boat in mid-ocean discipline and order can be maintained even amid the most terrible hardships, but anything in the nature of state or exclusiveness cannot. The Emperor, equally with Hengler, had to live, eat, and sleep in public. He had no safer resting-place than Hengler; he had no better food; he had no more shelter. And to the Emperor himself the change was as welcome as it was to his suite. To his mind ceremony would, in the circumstances, have been ridiculous, and he was relieved to be able to lay it down, and to feel it not beneath his position to lend a hand, as the others did, in the working of the boat, in the preparation of meals, and in the taking of observations. Indeed, that part of the experience was to him delightful. He was accustomed to be mentally active; but actual manual activity, involving the expenditure of exertion, the raising of blisters, and the occasional pinching of fingers, was sufficiently novel to be altogether pleasurable. The Emperor threw himself into his assumed part with the enthusiasm of the English youngster who goes for the first time on a camping-out expedition up the Thames. What were annoyances to some of the others were subjects of joke to him. As Emperor reserved, often taciturn, and always dignified, he was, as Von Dalhoff, the joyous soul of the little party in the pinnace; and so completely did

he adopt his new character, that in a few hours he seemed to have entirely laid aside his old self, and, as he himself said, to have 'put the boat on an even keel, she having been previously a good deal too much down by the stern.'

The day passed uneventfully, the breeze continuing, and good progress being made; but towards sunset the wind freshened considerably, the horizon became overcast, and the rapidly-falling barometer indicated that a disagreeable change was impending. Hurricanes are not at all common at any season in the Western Pacific; indeed, true hurricanes are seldom encountered anywhere in the Pacific except in the neighbourhood of land. But the Admiral, who knew the signs, saw quite enough to make him very apprehensive. A heavy gale—whether a true hurricane or not—was certainly brewing; and with a view to preparing for it, the Admiral caused a number of spare spars and oars, together with a spare sail, to be lashed together and weighted, so that the pinnace, attached to this drag by a span, might have something which she could ride to leeward of, which would help to break the sea, and which would, if the blow came from a wrong quarter, retard her drift.

This was, as it turned out, a very wise precaution; for at about ten o'clock that night a most terrible storm burst upon the boat. The gale began from the eastward, and swung round gradually, through south and west, to north-west, then as gradually going back to east. But the cyclone—for it was a regular cyclone, in spite of the distance from land—occupied no less than

nineteen hours in passing through all these changes, and during the whole of that trying time the pinnace and her occupants were in the most extreme peril. The seas were gigantic; a dozen times the boat narrowly escaped being swamped, and more than once she was on the brink of turning over head foremost, so sharp and steep were the waves down which she slid. Rest of any kind was, of course, out of the question for all. Indeed, occasionally the movements of the boat were so violent, that only by holding on to thwarts and gunwale was it possible to avoid being flung out of her. And, owing to the lanterns not being properly constructed, the unhappy castaways were for many successive hours in absolute darkness, drenched by seas which almost took their breath away, not knowing whither they were going, cold, bruised, hungry, and at times having to bale for dear life, lest their craft should go down under them.

The experience was a cruel one for all concerned, but especially for the old Field-Marshal, who, an indifferent sailor at the best, suffered terribly, and, moreover, had not the reserve of strength possessed by his younger companions. After two hours of struggle against his increasing weakness he collapsed altogether, and ceased to be capable of making any effort for his own preservation. The Emperor showed great solicitude for him, wrapped him in his own coat, and from time to time forced him to take mouthfuls of brandy; but, as morning came on, the veteran, propped against a thwart, lost consciousness, and when such dull and cheerless day-

light as the lowering clouds permitted broke, his condition was such as to justify the most serious apprehensions. The Emperor chafed him with brandy, but the old soldier gave scarcely any signs of life; and during the whole of the fearful day that followed he lay limp and passive, his white head rolling from side to side with the jumping of the boat, his eyes remaining closed, and not a sound escaping from his bloodless lips.

The others, bruised, weary, and cold though they were, suffered less; but even they had grown almost indifferent to the result when, towards evening, the weather moderated, and the sea began to go down. It was then possible to attend more systematically to Count Stark, who, by the Emperor's directions, was half stripped, rubbed very thoroughly with brandy, and wrapped in clothes freely saturated with the same spirit. Under this treatment he at length, to the general joy, slowly returned to consciousness, and, it being at length found practicable to light a lamp-stove and boil a kettle, he was presently supplied with some hot soup, which greatly assisted in reviving him.

But, though the gale had before midnight completely blown itself out, though food and rest were again available, and though the situation had ceased to be one of any imminent danger, the physical discomforts of the unfortunates were very little ameliorated, for everything in the boat was saturated with water, and there was no means of drying anything. Nor was it possible, owing to the still overclouded sky, to form even the vaguest idea as to the boat's whereabouts. All that was certain

was that, after having headed in turn to nearly every point of the compass, she again had a steady easterly breeze behind her. What had been her track during the hurricane no one even ventured to guess.

Next day, however, brought bright fine weather and warm sunshine, which speedily dried the clothes of all, and once more rendered everyone comparatively comfortable. The Field-Marshal seemed little the worse for the hardships which he had undergone; the Emperor was cheery and hopeful; and the Admiral at noon succeeded in getting an observation, which satisfied him that, in spite of the varied eccentricities of the hurricane, the boat had made very good progress on her course, and which enabled him to place his position in Lat. 25° 35′ S., and Long. 115° 55′ W. at mid-day on January 30th.

From that time forward the weather remained delightful, and the only inconveniences encountered were those small ones which are necessarily inseparable from boat-cruising, even in the most favourable circumstances. Provisions and water for six weeks had been put on board, and the Admiral saw no necessity for restricting allowances, and, in fact, decided not to restrict them until the party should have been at least three weeks at sea. But any such prolongation of the voyage appeared, after the subsidence of the storm, to be altogether improbable. The trades blew fresh and brisk astern; a thousand islands lay right ahead, and a friendly cruiser, or, at least, some friendly sail—and all sails save one would be friendly—might heave in sight at any moment.

Days and nights therefore passed pleasantly, if not quickly. Even the Field-Marshal's dislike to the sea grew modified, and he declared that, if only he could occasionally stretch his legs, he should be fairly happy. The monotony of the voyage was varied by spells of work at the oars, by unsuccessful attempts at fishing, and by games of chess, played on a thwart, that had been pencilled into squares, with silver and bronze coins of various kinds instead of with pieces. Each morning, moreover, the sails was lowered for half an hour, while those who felt disposed for it enjoyed a swim, due look-out being kept for sharks.

On the night of February 3rd the Admiral, who knew that land could not be far off, ordered a specially careful look-out to be kept; and at dawn on the following morning Hengler, who was in the bow, was able to report something, which he took to be an island, broad on the starboard-quarter. The Emperor, whose watch it was, ordered the boat to be brought to, and, rousing the Admiral, learnt from him that they were in sight of Ducie Island, which they had nearly missed in the darkness.

Ducie Island, in Lat. 24° 40′ S., and Long. 124° 48′ W., is an oval and uninhabited atoll, measuring about a mile and three-quarters long and a mile wide. Part of the reef rises to a height of twelve feet, and is covered with a dense growth of trees; but other parts of the barrier are in some places almost awash, and the atoll in one spot broken by a channel which, though not profound enough to be navigable, leads to the deep interior lagoon.

The island was not two miles distant, but, knowing it to be uninhabited, the Admiral would have altered course a point or so to the southward in order to make Pitcairn Island, had not the Emperor half-laughingly suggested that he had never been on a desert island, and that the place would enable the Field-Marshal to stretch his legs. The Admiral therefore made for the island, and at the south-west point of it found a little entrance in which the boat could lie comfortably, though she could not get right through into the lagoon.

The Lusatians, one and all, felt like children as they leapt ashore for the first time for nearly four months. They jumped, and sang, and shouted, they rolled upon the loose coral, they buried their faces in the sparse herbage that grew here and there, and the great yellow-bearded Von Puppenheim even played leap-frog with a brother-officer of equal rank.

The spot where the party landed formed a little low natural quay. Behind it, and distant not more than thirty yards from the water's edge, rose a scarcely penetrable thicket of trees of all kinds, so that the island could not be viewed as a whole. The thicket was alive with birds, but seemed to have no other denizens.

'Let us see what is beyond,' said the Emperor; and, going to the boat, he took out a couple of axes, one of which he handed to Von Puppenheim. 'The Admiral says that there is a lagoon in the centre. There are plenty of sharks outside, so why should we not get our morning's swim inside?'

He strode up to the edge of the wood, and eager, after

the constraint of the boat, for free exercise, he began, aided by the Lieutenant-Colonel, to cut his way in.

They were almost on the fringe of the tropics, and vegetation in those latitudes, even on small and exposed islands, grows luxuriantly; but so vigorously did the Emperor and his companion lay about them, that in twenty minutes they began to see the glitter of the interior lagoon, and in less than half an hour they had cut their way completely through the belt of trees and tangled undergrowth into the open air beyond.

There a strange and marvellous sight met their gaze. They stood with their backs to a tolerably regular amphitheatre of flourishing vegetation, but the whole eastward side of the atoll was in a state of absolute wreck. The trees from the barrier had been beaten down in huge inextricable masses and swept into the lagoon, where, still green, they floated. Great breaches, which were evidently fresh, had been made in the reef on that side, as if by a prolonged bombardment; and it was plain that some recent storm—possibly, even, the hurricane in which the pinnace had suffered—had burst in from the east with a power which nothing had been able to withstand.

But a stranger sight than the devastated island was before them, for in the midst of the lagoon, like a huge battered turtle, lay the capsized hull of a large ship. Fifteen feet of it or more stood out of the water, and it rested somewhat upon one side, one bilge-keel being exposed and the other covered. The steel bottom, which was foul with sea-growth, was wrinkled and pierced

in many places. Here and there there were considerable rents and whole plates torn off, so that the blackness of the interior was visible. The ship had clearly been flung across the low reef by the tempest, and had capsized as, smashed and torn, she had fallen inside.

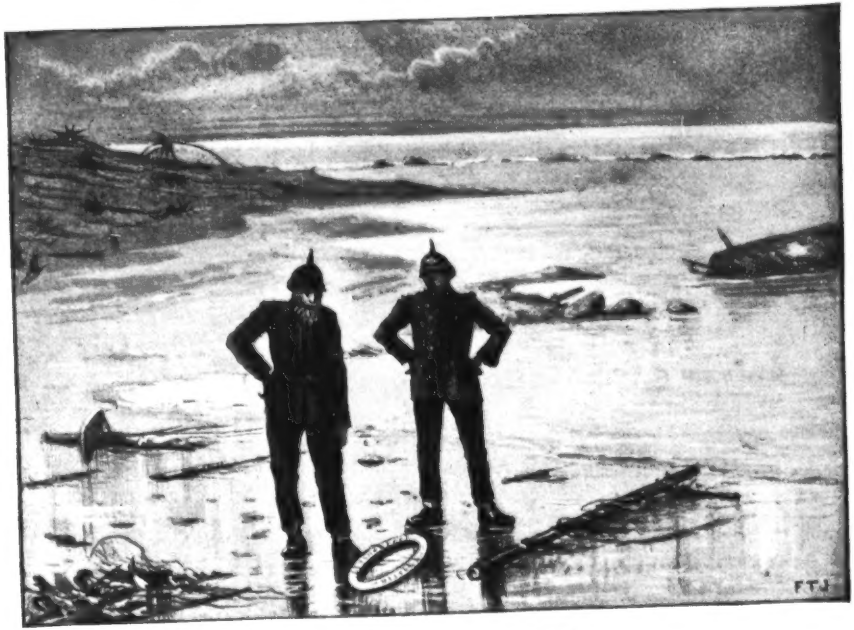
The Emperor stood aghast at the awful demonstration of the power of the forces of nature.

'She must have been a fine vessel,' he said.

Von Puppenheim kicked over a battered life-buoy that lay at his feet. Painted in blue letters on the canvas were the words '*Philistia*, Liverpool.'

The Emperor shuddered.

'Merciful God!' he ejaculated; 'and we were spared! Let us go back, Von Puppenheim!'



THE LAST OF THE "PHILISTIA."

CHAPTER XI.

HOME.

The Emperor and Von Puppenheim returned rapidly through the wood to their companions near the boat. They had seen something which chilled them to the marrow, and as, one behind the other, they struggled amid the undergrowth, neither spoke.

'Come!' shouted the Emperor when he was again within sight of his friends. 'Bring boat-hooks, bring oars, bring knives, bring brandy. We may yet be able to save someone. The *Philistia* is ashore here.' And he went back as rapidly as he had come.

On the steep coral shore of the lagoon, cast up far above the water, a great quantity of *débris* was lying. Fragments of smashed boats, splintered spars, and broken gratings, and cart-loads of mere unrecognisable match-wood, were scattered all over the inner beach. Here, too, was a torn article of clothing, and there, amid the very roots of the vegetation, a battered corpse, naked, swollen, hideous, with dull, staring eyes, and with the very flesh torn away by the sharp rocks.

They soon found other bodies, and among them that

of the captain of the ship; but they discovered no trace of any of the American conspirators, who, it was suggested by the Admiral, might have all been below at the moment of the catastrophe; for, said he, 'in a black night and a howling gale, a ship, especially if she were not sure of her position, might run upon Ducie Island even before the alarm of danger could be passed to the bridge from the look-out forward, and all may have been over in three minutes.'

The whole interior shore of the lagoon was most carefully searched; the party shouted in concert, and fired revolvers, and blew a fog-horn; and every spot to which an injured man could by any possibility have crawled was thoroughly examined; but all in vain. So far as could be ascertained, the disaster had been complete; and, if there were any survivors, they had, it was soon quite certain, quitted the island. But it was very unlikely that any soul could have escaped. The position of the ship showed how fearfully sudden must have been the accident, and rendered it practically out of the question that any boat could have been lowered in the lagoon.

By means of the floating vegetation and wreckage several of the Lusatians, including the Emperor, climbed on to the slippery bottom of the ship, which lay not more than forty or fifty feet from the nearest rocks, and looked through the gaping rents of her hull into her hold. Into some of these, moreover, they lowered a lantern; but they found nothing save darkness, water, and inextricable confusion. The boilers and machinery

had evidently dropped out of the ship, perhaps scalding to death some who could not have escaped the scarcely less fearful fate of suffocation or drowning a few minutes later.

The whole day and the following night were spent upon Ducie Island; and early on the morning of February 5th the castaways, perfectly satisfied that there was no prospect of finding on the isolated spot a single survivor, put to sea again in lovely weather, and, still with the staunch breeze from the eastward, headed for Pitcairn Island, about four hundred miles to the south-west-by-west. But they never reached the famous hiding-place of the *Bounty* mutineers of 1789. On the next day a ship was sighted, coming up quickly under steam from the south-east; and by noon on February 6th the little party, not much the worse for its long voyage and for its exposure, was taken on board H.M.S. *Theseus*, the officers of which, with Lieutenant Dicker in a suit of plain clothes that did not fit him, received them very respectfully and cordially at the gangway.

There was little danger of the Emperor being recognised, for he wore a nine days' beard; all signs of his rank had been removed from his uniform, and his clothes were as torn and beggarly as those of Hengler himself; for the hard work in the hurricane and in the thickets of Ducie Island had left its mark upon them.

The Emperor, even before he was introduced by the Field-Marshal as Baron von Dalhoff, managed to slip aside and say a word or two of necessary explanation to Dicker. In his new capacity he was, instead of the

head of the party, its lowest member; yet, thanks to the hospitality of the British officers, every one of whom was most anxious to surrender his cabin, his Majesty obtained very comfortable accommodation, and at least some measure of privacy. As for the Field-Marshal and the Admiral, the captain insisted upon their taking his sleeping and his spare cabin, and declared that he should fare exceedingly well if he were allowed, so long as they favoured him with their company, to curl himself up on the sofa in the fore-cabin.

The *Theseus* had been specially commissioned and despatched to look for the *Philistia*; and, having heard the story of the castaways, her gallant captain declared that nothing else detained him, and that he would at once return to Europe, calling on his way, however, at Valparaiso, to leave despatches for the Rear-Admiral on the Pacific station, and to fill up with coal. He would have conveyed the party all the way home, and was, indeed, anxious to do so, but at Valparaiso the Lusatian cruiser *Chriemhild*, another old friend of the kidnapped ones, was fallen in with, and the transfer to her less capacious, but not less hospitable, quarters was made as a matter of course. At Valparaiso there were European newspapers of as late as New Year's Day, and the Emperor had the immense satisfaction of learning that up to that time nothing of vital importance had happened to imperil the success of his plans, and that the empire was still enjoying peace and prosperity.

Nothing of vital importance had happened. Von Dalhoff, that is, was still unsuspectedly holding the

reins of government and guiding the destinies of the State.

But an alarming accident had, nevertheless, occurred. A Sandburg telegram, dated Christmas Day, and despatched to the *New York Tribune*, gave the following particulars of it:

'It is with regret that I inform you that to-day a dastardly attempt, which, but for the heroic devotion of his sister, the Princess Nannette, would probably have been fatal, was made upon the life of the Emperor. It was known that his Majesty would attend service this morning in the church of Sanct Moritz, a new and magnificent structure, which owes its completion as much to the example as to the liberality of the Princess; and long before the appointed hour crowds of people had assembled in the streets leading from the royal palace to the building. At twenty minutes past eleven the imperial carriage, an open victoria, in which sat the Emperor, in the full uniform of the Regiment of Guards, with the Princess on his left, drove at a moderately rapid pace along the Aepfel Allee, and turned sharp to the left into the somewhat narrower Rosine Strasse, in which the church stands. Exactly at the corner, and clinging to the lamp-post there, to save himself from being pushed into the street by the people behind him, was a man, respectably dressed, who carried his right hand thrust between the buttons of his overcoat. As the carriage swerved this man darted forward, and, drawing a revolver from his breast, presented it, across the face of the Princess, at the Emperor. The Princess, with

remarkable presence of mind, knocked the weapon up as the man fired; but, drawing back a foot or two, he fired a second time, and the bullet, traversing the muscles of the Princess's right arm a few inches above the elbow, struck his Majesty on the left shoulder. The Emperor, who at the moment had been engaged in returning the salutations of the people on his right, had not seen the progress of the attack, and the shock of his wound must have been almost his first intimation that anything of the kind had been attempted, for the whole affair occupied less than five seconds. That the Princess had been hit was at once evident; that the Emperor, who had been more seriously injured, had also been struck was not publicly known until two hours later. His Majesty, who displayed complete coolness, and who scarcely appeared to be even surprised, took the Princess, who had fainted, at once into his arms, and, ordering the carriage to be turned round, bid the coachman drive slowly back to the royal palace. In the meantime Dr. von Mittag, chief of the Medical Department of the army, who was in attendance on horseback, dismounted, and, entering the carriage, was presently able to give the Emperor a reassuring account of the Princess's condition, which is in nowise serious. The wound is confined to the muscular tissues, and although the dress and even the skin beneath it were scorched and blackened by the powder, there is every reason to believe that there will be no worse permanent results than two insignificant cicatrices and a little discoloration. On the way back to the palace the

THE WHOLE AFFAIR OVERFLOWED LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES.

Emperor's solicitude for the Princess was touching and almost painful to witness. It could be seen by all that when, more than once, his Majesty kissed his sister's brow, or pressed her hand, his eyes filled with tears. His own sufferings, which must have been considerable —for the Princess was actually resting against his wound for some time—were studiously concealed; for his Majesty, as he leapt with his usual activity from the carriage, flung a rug from the seat behind him over his left shoulder, and then assisted in the removal of the Princess to the palace. I waited in the neighbourhood to catch Dr. von Mittag on his departure; and when, at a little after one o'clock, he came out, he greatly astonished me by saying, in reply to my inquiries about the Princess: "Oh, her Royal Highness is all right. It is the Emperor who has been badly hurt. Here is the announcement which I am empowered to communicate to the press." He showed me a paper, in the Emperor's own handwriting, which, after recounting the substance of what I have already cabled to you, added, as if by way of afterthought: "His Majesty mentions with sorrow that the magnificent and heroic devotion of his dear sister, the Princess Nannette, though doubtless, under the blessing of heaven, it saved his life, was not entirely successful in saving him from all the consequences of the misguided assailant's temerity. He has received a wound which, though it will not, he trusts, incapacitate him, even for a day, for the conduct of public business, must, he fears, confine him to his apartments for about a week. Her Royal Highness the

Princess, he is thankful to say, has suffered more severely from the shock than from the wound itself. The Emperor bears the most enthusiastic testimony to the Princess's courage, which he is proud to reflect was shown by a member of the royal house, and by one who is almost as dear to all Lusatians as to himself." I asked the doctor for further particulars of the Emperor's injury, but he laughed, and said: "I may only tell you that his Majesty makes very little of it. I dare say that he will be on horseback in a week. He is very determined, and he has a splendid constitution." He would say nothing more; but I am given to understand by others who may know that the surgeons experienced difficulty in extracting the ball and in stopping the bleeding, and that, at least for a short time, the Emperor's life was in imminent danger. All sorts of rumours are, however, prevalent, and the exact facts are by no means certain. The wound only is indisputable. His Majesty, nevertheless, insisted on writing the announcement from which I have quoted. Later news reports that he is doing well, and is free from fever. The Princess, I am informed, regained consciousness soon after having been carried into the palace, and at once asked for her imperial brother; nor, in spite of the pain of her own wound, would she consent to leave his side this afternoon until he had fallen asleep. The would-be assassin has been recognised as a Russian anarchist agitator, who, as a reason for his action, expressed as an opinion that if the Emperor were removed, war with Russia would follow, and his fellow-countrymen

would then, in the confusion, have an opportunity of bringing about a revolution. The man narrowly escaped being torn to pieces by the crowd, and the police and soldiers had to struggle with the mob in order to rescue him. It is characteristic of the Emperor that, as soon as he had seen the Princess safely deposited in the palace, he inquired for the assassin, and expressed a hope that he had not been hurt. The affair has caused an extraordinary amount of indignation, both the Emperor and the Princess being as popular as it is possible for them to be, even in this loyal and enthusiastic fatherland; and if the prison in which the man is confined were not strongly guarded, I believe, in spite of the legal and orderly instincts of the Lusatians, that he would be lynched.'

The anxiety with which the Emperor searched all papers of a later date may be better imagined than described. There were, of course, daily reports of the health both of Von Dalhoff and of the Princess Nannette; but, while those concerning the latter were in the highest degree satisfactory, those concerning the former left much to be desired, and the latest of them neither announced that he had left his apartments, nor suggested that he was likely to do so in the immediate future. 'His Imperial Majesty,' said one paper, 'has not ceased since the day of his wound to transact official business; but he is confined to a couch, and in that position he receives the ministers and gives audience. The Princess, whose arm is healing rapidly, is continually with the Emperor. Daily inquiries as to his Majesty's

progress are made by all the crowned heads of Europe, and by nearly all the princes and princesses of the Empire, including the Princess Griselda of Stormarn, who, upon the news of the attempted assassination becoming known, telegraphed her wish to be permitted to assist in the nursing of the illustrious patient. To this womanly request, however, the Princess Nannette, fearing no doubt that an interview might be over-trying to the Emperor, felt it her duty to reply that, as there appeared to be no danger, it would be well if the Princess of Stormarn would postpone her visit for a few days. Her Highness, therefore, yesterday went by train to Sandburg, drove to the Palace, and saw his Majesty. The meeting is reported to have been very affecting; and this, looking to the peculiar circumstances of the case, it may well have been. Her Highness returned in the afternoon to Stormarn.'

With this news the Emperor had to content himself until his arrival at Rio de Janeiro, where the cruiser was to coal for her passage across the Atlantic. At Rio there were European papers of February 10th. The local journals, which, of course, had telegraphic intelligence of a date about twenty days later, contained no details, but merely said that 'the Emperor made very little progress, and was still confined to his apartments.' The European ones, however, had in them passages which, though carefully wrapped up, conveyed very alarming suggestions. The wound, it seemed, could not be induced to heal; the patient was in consequence greatly weakened, and the surgeons were looking grave.

There was loose talk even of the advisability of a regency; but this, it was officially announced, would never be contemplated by his Majesty 'so long as he was capable of fulfilling the most necessary duties of his great trust.'

The Emperor was depressed and anxious. He would have been much more so had he known what Dr. von Mittag, or Von Dalhoff himself, might have told him. But he was young and sanguine, and soon hope was once more strong in him. 'In twenty days,' he thought to himself, 'I shall be home once more. In twenty days Von Dalhoff will no doubt be quite well again. Of course he will recover; he must recover; young and strong fellows like us do not die so easily at five-and-twenty. Besides, had he been going to die, he would not have survived for all these weeks.'

And as he thought of Von Dalhoff his heart grew warm.

'How shall I ever repay his courage and his devotion?' he asked himself. 'What good enough office can I make for him? What honours can I shower upon him?'

Then to the Emperor's mind came the scene of months before, when Von Dalhoff had kissed the Princess Nannette and called her 'little one'; and the picture of the sorely wounded officer holding the Princess to his heart, and, forgetful of his own injury, unmanned by her trifling hurt. The Emperor drew a deep long breath.

'I understand,' he murmured to himself—'I am sure I understand. Why did I not think of that before? Do I not love, too? Have I yet learnt nothing?'

This new conclusion rendered him again uneasy. He was not prepared to find the slightest fault with Von Dalhoff, should he have fallen in love with the Princess. It was a proper and natural tribute to her beauty and accomplishments, and the Emperor felt certain that the innate loyalty of Von Dalhoff would cause him to sternly repress any declaration to the Princess of his passion for her. But the prospect that the Princess on her side might have fallen in love with Von Dalhoff was much more perturbing to the Emperor. He had planned a brilliant future for her. He hoped to see her, too, wearing an imperial crown. If she had given her heart to Von Dalhoff—a noble fellow truly, but a mere captain of infantry—what a collapse! The Emperor, who was almost as jealous of his sister as he might have been of his betrothed wife, bit his lips.

'But, after all, it was my fault,' he at last honestly admitted to himself. 'They did not seek the danger, I put them into it; and I ought to have foreseen the natural consequences. I, and I alone, am to blame; and it is for me to make the best of it, if what I suspect have happened.'

Those last twenty days of his absence from home proved to be the most trying of all. The *Chriemhild* did not steam fast enough for his impatience. She would not have done so had she steamed fifty knots an hour. He wanted to see Dalhoff, to grasp his hand, to find him well, to reward him, if he could, in some fitting way; he wanted to see his sister, and to thank her for her devotion and bravery; and he wanted to make an end of

the comedy with the Princess of Stormarn, and to carry her to his home. But he wanted also to be at work again in his own sphere, to resume his power, to feel that the levers of the mighty machinery of empire were once more under his hands. Of old the duties of his position had seemed to be almost too much for him; he now longed for the most trivial of them. Each had become too precious to be ever again shirked; and in his sincere Lusatian conviction that, as Emperor, he was ordained of God, he ceased during that homeward voyage to believe that the trust which Von Dalhoff, from motives of loyalty to a man, had freely sacrificed himself to fulfil, could be, in even its smallest details, unworthy of the attention of one who had been specially chosen by heaven for the post.

The *Chriemhild*, having plenty of coal, did not, like the majority of home-coming Lusatian warships, call in at one of the ports on the English south coast, but steamed direct to Friedenhaven; and early in the morning of April 5th dropped anchor in the gulf whence the Emperor had been kidnapped nearly six months earlier.

It was a raw gray dawn. A brisk north-easter was blowing, and bringing with it now and then occasional squalls of sleet, which kept the decks wet, and made the men look forlorn and miserable as they splashed about barefooted in their glistening oilskins. On a rainy day even the smartest man-of-war assumes a wretched and bedraggled appearance.

Yet the Emperor Carl, when he came up from his

cabin and gazed about him into the mist, through which familiar landmarks loomed, was not conscious of any feeling of depression, but rather of one of extreme exhilaration. The air, cold and damp though it was, seemed to him to be far preferable to any air that he had breathed amid the seagirt islands of the South Seas; and the bitter spray, that splashed in his face and hung in big drops upon his beard, tasted to him sweeter than nectar, for at last he was again breathing his own air, and being buffeted by the sleet of his own dear Lusatia.

The captain of the cruiser, who was at his post on the bridge, had already ordered a boat to be called away, in order that he might go ashore and report himself to the Port-Admiral. Admiral Spott decided to accompany him; the Field-Marshal also asked permission to be of the party, and requested to be allowed to take the Baron von Dalhoff along with him. The request was preferred as a matter of form, and granted as a matter of course; and at a quarter past six the steam-pinnace left the ship, and went off, puffing and tumbling, through the broken water to the landing-stage a mile away.

Friedenhaven was awake, but it had scarcely rubbed the sleepiness out of its eyes. A few wet fishermen were busy with their boats and nets; a few wet workmen were on their way to factory or workshop; a few wet loafers, hands in pockets, smoked and shivered under the lee of the watch-house on the quay: and a wet policeman stood mechanically saluting on the stage as the pinnace drew alongside, and was slowly hauled to the slippery steps by means of a couple of boat-hooks. Often had the

Emperor landed there in the gay sunshine to the sound of music and amid the glitter of bright arms and brilliant uniforms; but never before had he landed there with the same sense of thankful elation as on that dismal and cheerless April morning. The old Field-Marshal watched him, and noted the difficulty with which his Majesty repressed his feelings.

'Come, Von Dalhoff,' he said, as soon as all the party were on shore, 'we will go and ask the General to give us some breakfast. If we all go to the Admiral's we shall overwhelm him;' and he saluted the naval officers, and, with the Emperor, left them.

'A hundred thanks!' exclaimed his Majesty, when the two found themselves alone. 'I could not keep up the comedy for long here. If I had gone to the Admiral's I am sure I should have betrayed myself. Besides, I mustn't waste time. I want to hear the news, and to know how our poor Von Dalhoff is. That is the first thing. The next is to get to Sandburg as soon as possible. It is like a dream, my dear Stark.'

'Your Majesty must also get some clothes in which to travel,' said the Field-Marshal, with a smile. 'They will scarcely admit you to your own Palace as you are; but with your gracious permission I can arrange all that. My son is here in garrison, and he is much of your Majesty's figure.'

'As you will, my dear Field-Marshal; but let us not lose time. I am as impatient as a child to go home for his holidays.'

They were soon at the General's quarters. The

sentries, recognising the Count but not the Emperor, saluted; the guard was called out; the General, who had already begun his day's work, came forward in delighted astonishment to welcome and put himself at the disposal of his beloved chief; the Emperor for the last time was introduced as Von Dalhoff; and in less than an hour the party, reinforced by Major Stark, the Field-Marshal's son, and by the General's hospitable wife, was breakfasting in the homely Lusatian fashion, and listening, open-mouthed, to the old soldier's story—deprived, however, of its most astounding feature—of the voyage and end of the *Philistia*.

But in the interval the Emperor had managed to learn news about those in whose welfare he was chiefly interested. The Princess Nannette, they told him, had completely recovered, and was in no way the worse for her wound; but the Emperor—and when they spoke of the Emperor they looked gloomy and shook their heads—the Emperor did not seem to improve. The doctors did not know what to make of his condition. They could not get his wound to heal. His Majesty was growing weaker. It was a sad business for Lusatia.

Major Stark had an extensive wardrobe, and he gladly put the whole of it at the disposal of his father's companion in misfortune. The result was that the Emperor, in black frock coat and silk hat, looking in all respects like a private gentleman, was able to take the 8.55 train from Friedenhaven for Sandburg. Ostensibly he carried despatches from the Field-Marshal to the

War Minister. It was an irregular thing, of course, to send despatches by an officer in plain clothes; but officers are not kidnapped every day and held in bondage until their uniforms are worn out; and naturally Von Dalhoff would find uniform of his own in Sandburg, and would deliver the despatches in due order.

It is a long way from Friedenhaven to Sandburg, and the anxious traveller did not reach the Lusatian capital until nearly five o'clock in the afternoon. He had no baggage; the weather was fine, and the humour seized him, in spite of his anxiety, to walk to the Palace instead of driving thither; for there is a certain pleasure to be derived from the brief postponement of any great happiness, so long as that happiness is assured and can be enjoyed at will.

As he walked rapidly, a newsboy offered him an evening paper, and, as he held it, murmured in his Sandburg patois, 'Critical condition of the Emperor, gracious gentleman!'

The Emperor stopped and unfolded the sheet. On the first page were the words: 'His Imperial Majesty, who passed a bad night, is this morning much weaker. The physicians are unable to conceal that they regard his Majesty's condition with uneasiness. Professor Doctor von Billingshausen, the distinguished military specialist, has been summoned by telegraph from Friedenhaven, and is expected to arrive at five o'clock. The neighbourhood of the Imperial Palace is surrounded by a loyal and anxious crowd, the stillness and sad demeanour of which afford remarkable testimony of the

depth of the popular feeling. The Princess Nannette does not quit the Emperor's side.'

The Emperor gave up his intention of walking and sprang into a cab, directing the driver to take him to a side-door of the Palace of which he preserved the key. To reach this side-door the front of the great building had first to be passed. The broad square before it was a silent sea of heads. Above, on the main flagstaff, the Imperial Lusatian standard blew out against the sky. So long as that still flew, there was life and there was hope.

About the side-door the crowd was thin and easily traversed. No one cared to remain for long in a place whence he could not see the standard. The sentries took the Emperor to be the Baron von Dalhoff. The people probably took him to be a surgeon, until he pulled out his key and hastily admitted himself. Then they wondered.

Inside the palace, the Emperor hurried at once to the apartments where he knew that he should find those whom he most wanted to see. He passed an old servant who, saluting, whispered with tears in his voice: 'Gently, Herr Baron, for the love of Heaven! We move on tip-toe! His Majesty is dying!' But the Emperor, though he slackened his pace somewhat, did not move on tip-toe. He went on, opened a door, and strode in among a little crowd of doctors, who, in the room next to that in which the sufferer was lying, were quietly discussing the case. Professor von Billingshausen, who had driven all the way from the station, had just arrived, and was taking off his coat.

'The worst of it is,' a little bullet-headed surgeon of European reputation was saying as the door opened, 'we cannot induce his Majesty to let us make a proper examination of the wound. Nor will her Royal Highness, the Princess, be persuaded to consent to our putting the patient under an anæsthetic and then making a proper examination in spite of his Majesty's incomprehensible and most regrettable determination.'

'Hush!' said another doctor, as he eyed the newcomer with some suspicion.

'It is the Baron von Dalhoff,' said a third, 'his Majesty's secretary. So you have come back safely, Herr Baron, from your kidnappers.'

'Never mind me,' said the Emperor, much agitated. 'I must see the Princess immediately, on the most vitally important business. Will one of you gentlemen have the goodness to bring her Royal Highness from the sick-room? I will not detain her for long. The business is confidential; I will therefore await her Royal Highness in the study. Merely be so kind as to say that I am there; it will be sufficient.'

And he went alone to the empty study, and stood watching the door by which his sister must enter.

She came in almost immediately, lovelier, if possible, than ever, but pale and in tears, and, running forward, flung herself with absolute abandonment upon her brother's neck.

'Oh, Carl! my Carl!' she sobbed; 'pray God that you are not too late! He has been so loyal and noble. He chose to die rather than betray you. He would not

let them see the wound, because—because—you know what is marked upon his shoulder, and the wound is close to the words. Tell him he must let them see it. Come, Carl! If he should die! Think of what he has suffered!'

Tears came into the Emperor's eyes also. He gazed down at his sister's sad face, and kissed it again and again.

'Pray God that I am not too late, Nan!' he ejaculated fervently. 'Dare I see him?'

'He longs for nothing else,' she replied. 'We heard this morning of your return. It seems as if he had been holding up only until the news should arrive; ever since he has been much worse. Come to him.'

The Emperor and his sister passed through the room in which the doctors were still assembled, and gently entered the one beyond. The chamber was partially darkened. White almost as the linen amid which he lay was Von Dalhoff. His eyes glittered feverishly in the semi-gloom. The Emperor approached him, and, bending over him, kissed his brow affectionately.

'Your trust is fulfilled, my dear friend,' he said. 'You must now let the surgeons have their way, for our sakes.'

The sick man attempted to raise himself.

'Heaven be thanked, sire——' he began; but he fell back slowly, and it was evident that he had fainted.

'Quick, Nan!—the surgeons!' said the Emperor. 'Tell them that he consents.'

The Princess stepped to the door and threw it open.

'He has fainted,' she said, in a tremulous voice; 'but he has consented, and I consent. I pray you, gentlemen, to lose no time in examining the wound.'

Professor von Billingshausen and the bullet-headed gentleman entered, bowing, and, while the Emperor and his sister withdrew to the window, brought the patient to himself again, and then began their operations, having first drawn up the blinds and admitted the full light of the afternoon sun. They were too much engaged to notice that, while they worked about the bed, the Princess held the hand of the supposed secretary, and that, whenever the sufferer emitted the slightest sound, the supposed secretary drew the Princess closer to him and kissed her forehead, and whispered some consoling or hopeful word. But they cannot fail to have remarked the curious fact that close to the wound upon their patient's shoulder were tattooed the apparently incongruous words, 'I am Wilhelm, Baron von Dalhoff.' They did not, however, comment upon it. The bullet-headed man merely grunted. His only words, muttered five minutes later, were: 'The bullet at last; and, no wonder, there's a precious fine abscess too!'

The Princess watched the work at the bed as if it dazed her. She saw an attendant carrying water and lint; she saw the bright instruments; she saw the bullet-headed man with his cuffs turned back; but nothing save Von Dalhoff's suppressed groans made her shrink or shudder.

The ordeal was over in a quarter of an hour. The retention within the wound of the bullet, which had

struck and partially flattened itself against the bone of the upper arm and had slightly splintered it, had set up an immense amount of inflammatory action, had caused a perpetual drain upon the patient's strength, and had made of an injury which at first had been severe but not dangerous, an imminent peril to life.

Weaker than ever after the excitement and pain, Von Dalhoff subsided into a state not far removed from insensibility; and the Princess, who for days had scarcely left the patient's side, was persuaded by her brother to take a little much-needed rest, while he, seated at his desk and still confused by the strangeness and tragedy of events, strove to draw up the state-paper which should proclaim the true history of the past half-year, and justify and do honour to the devotion of his sister and of her—— yes, of her lover; for it was already quite evident that if Von Dalhoff were not indeed Nannette's lover, Nannette's future was not destined to be a happy one. She had said nothing definite, and Von Dalhoff himself had said nothing at all; but the Emperor knew enough about his sister to be fully aware that, save for the sufferings of a lover, Nannette could not have trembled and shuddered exactly as she had trembled and shuddered in Von Dalhoff's room. She would have shown, perhaps, equal sympathy; but she would have shown less apprehension.

The Emperor began half a dozen drafts, and, dissatisfied, tore them up; but at length he hit upon an idea that pleased him, and, having once grasped it, wrote rapidly, and with the facility of a practised man of

letters. When he had finished it, he re-read it, making a few insignificant corrections and alterations as he did so; and then, lying back in his chair for a moment, and still looking at the paper, he fell into a brief reverie.

'How will the people take it?' he wondered. 'How will Europe take it? What a valuable thing it would be to Hoodlum if he were here and I let him take a copy of it! Does it say enough about Von Dalhoff's great services?'

He made yet another alteration or two, and, having folded the paper and placed it in his pocket, went, still as Von Dalhoff, to Von Dalhoff's apartments and shaved off his beard, replacing it with one of the beards which Von Dalhoff had worn in the days prior to the kidnapping.

It was by this time dusk, and the Palace lamps were being lighted. He crossed the corridor to the sick man's room and, entering quietly, dismissed the nurse for a season and sat down by the bed.

Von Dalhoff still lay semi-conscious and with his eyes closed, and the Emperor, as he watched him, was able to realize how terribly he had suffered. The face, the whole form, was shrunken; the pallid skin was almost transparent; the hand of the uninjured right arm was thin and fragile-looking, and the wrist, once so firm and strong, was mere bone and skin. The Emperor took the Baron's hand.

'Is that you, little one?' murmured Von Dalhoff.

'It is I—the Emperor,' answered the other.

The Baron's eyes opened, and a slight blush seemed to pass across his face.

'Pardon, sire,' he said. 'That is all over. I have done my duty. Oh, sire, I thank you! It has been six months of heaven. She is so good—she is so good!'

'Why is it all over?' asked the Emperor gently.

He saw that the patient was not quite master of his senses, yet he wished to know more.

'I have done my duty,' continued the Baron, as if he barely heard. 'Now I shall go far, and forget. You shall not know, sire, that I have dared to love her. She shall not know—she shall not be unhappy.'

'But she will be very unhappy, I suspect, if she does not know,' said the Emperor. 'Why do you not tell her?'

'I shall not betray my trust,' returned Von Dalhoff, still as if he were talking to himself. 'I have once kissed her. It was more than I deserved. But that was no betrayal, sire; his Majesty stood by and saw. What would his Majesty say, sire, if I, a simple captain, should dare—should dare—to talk of love to her Royal Highness? Yet for six months I have called her "little one," and have seen her every day; and when she was hurt she lay on my breast, and when I was hurt she nursed me; and I have seen her weep when she did not know that I was awake.'

'You should tell her the truth,' said the Emperor.

'You do not know how completely he has trusted me, sire; I could not do his Majesty such an injury.'

The Emperor relinquished the Baron's hand, and, rising, left the room, and went noiselessly to the room in which, still dressed, the Princess was sleeping. Half regretfully he awoke her.

'Oh, Carl, is he worse?' she asked.

'No, Nan—no worse; and I hope that he will soon be better. But I want you to come with me to him; you may be able to do him some good. He is anxious, I think, and uneasy. He seems to like you to be with him.'

The Princess was on her feet in an instant.

'Of course I will go,' she said. 'And, indeed, I am quite refreshed now; I must have slept for ages.'

'You have been lying down for about two hours,' returned the Emperor, with a smile, 'and possibly you have slept for half that time.'

'But indeed, Carl, I am quite refreshed,' she insisted.

'Then come,' he said, as he led the way to Von Dalhoff's room.

When they had reached it, he motioned his sister to a chair in a corner, and, resuming his place at the bedside, again took the Baron's hand. Presently the sick man spoke.

'I hope that his Majesty will be satisfied when he returns,' he said, still wandering a little. 'They say that he reached Friedenhaven this morning. No one would think now that I resemble his Majesty. Besides, his Majesty has grown a beard. I am done with altogether; I have had my day.'

'Why have you had your day?' asked the Emperor, who hoped that the conversation might take the same course as before.

'I shall see her no more,' said Von Dalhoff.

'See whom no more?'

'Ah! you do not know about the Princess. No one knows; not even the Princess herself. But you will not tell her that I love her.'

The Princess Nannette came across from her distant chair, and kneeling at the bedside, took Von Dalhoff's hand from the Emperor and kissed it and wept over it, while his Majesty, who had also risen, went to the window. Presently she stole up behind him and threw her arms about his neck.

'Forgive me, Carl,' she whispered, and her whole body trembled with her emotion. 'Do not be angry. But if he should get well, with the blessing of God, and should say all that again, I could never marry any other man, even to please you, Carl, my brother, my Emperor.'

The Emperor did not reply, but took her hand and led her again to the bedside.

'Von Dalhoff,' he exclaimed in a louder voice than he had previously used in the sick-room: and at the same time he pulled off his beard and flung it away.

The sick man opened his eyes.

'Sire,' he began. It was clear that he knew now where he was and who was addressing him.

'Hush,' said the Emperor; 'do not fatigue yourself, my dear fellow. All is well. I am safely back. Nannette is here, and will not leave you. We will both take

care of you and make you sound and strong again. And I have told her what you told me just now, and she is no more angry than I am.'

'What did I tell your Majesty?' asked Von Dalhoff. 'I have been wandering, I dare say.'

The Emperor took the Princess's hand, raised it to his own lips, and placed it to the Baron's.

'You told me,' he said, 'that you loved this; and I can see that, whether you were wandering or not, you meant it. Now, make haste and get well. For six months you have lived nobly and loyally for her brother. It will be less tedious to live as nobly and as loyally for herself.'

On the following morning the Emperor's proclamation appeared in the official *Gazette*, and was flashed word for word all over the world. For a month it was the talk of Europe. There have been many other royal romances since the present century began; there has even been another kidnapping of a ruling prince. But the history of the Emperor's case, and of Von Dalhoff's devotion and reward, was far more romantic than anything that had ever before been made known, and put all other royal romances into the shade.

The only people who did not appreciate the story were the Emperor's enemies. If they had but known the truth, they would, they felt, have had a splendid opportunity of making mincemeat of Lusatia. Yet the chance had slipped from them.

Hoodlum was delighted for two reasons. He was glad that his imperial friend had escaped in safety, and he

was equally glad that his own connection with the episode enabled him to contribute to *Scrarpner's Magazine* three long articles concerning it. So good an opportunity does not come to every American writer.

The Princess Griselda of Stormarn was likewise delighted for two reasons. Not only was the comedy which had been played to excuse the postponement of her marriage at an end, but also she had the satisfaction of knowing that, without any interference on her part, her father's great wish was to be gratified.

The bright summer day which witnessed the marriage of the Emperor Carl saw the Empress Griselda's father restored to his ancient position as reigning Duke of Stormarn. It saw also another marriage, that of the Princess Nannette, 'the Pearl of Ruhland.' The bridegroom was not Wilhelm, Baron von Dalhoff, but Wilhelm, Prince von Dalhoff; and as his Majesty the Emperor was at the moment otherwise engaged, the old Field-Marshal Leonhard, Count Stark, gave away the Princess Nannette, and was the first to kiss her after the ceremony.

THE END.

AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS OF

Fiction.

Selected from the Catalogue of

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

COMPLETE CATALOGUE SENT
UPON APPLICATION.

MARIE CORELLI.

Barabbas.

A Dream of the World's Tragedy.

12mo. Cloth, $1.00.

"A book which aroused in some quarters more violent hostility than any book of recent years. By most secular critics the authoress was accused of bad taste, bad art, and gross blasphemy; but, in curious contrast, most of the religious papers acknowledged the reverence of treatment and the dignity of conception which characterized the work."—*London Athenæum.*

"It is a remarkable story in many ways, bold yet reverent in its handling of the great and solemn facts of the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, striking in its fresh and sympathetic representations of Judas, Barabbas, and others, uplifting in its tender and beautiful conception of Christ, and brilliant in its descriptions."—*Boston Congregationalist.*

Vendetta;

Or, The Story of One Forgotten.

12mo. Cloth, $1.00.

"It is a thrilling and irresistibly charming book."—*Baltimore American.*

"The story is Italian, the time 1884, and the precise stage of the acts, Naples, during the last visitation of the cholera. A romance, but a romance of reality. No mind of man can imagine incidents so wonderful, so amazing as those of actual occurrence. While the story is exciting, and must be read through when once begun, it furnishes a vivid and impressive picture of Italian life and morals."—*Washington National Republican.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

Captain Charles King, U.S.A.

Under Fire. *Illustrated. Cloth, $1.25.*

The Colonel's Daughter. *Illustrated. Cloth, $1.25.*

Marian's Faith. *Illustrated. Cloth, $1.25.*

Captain Blake. *Illustrated. Cloth, $1.25.*

Foes in Ambush. *Cloth, $1.25.*

Kitty's Conquest. *Cloth, $1.00.*

Starlight Ranch, and Other Stories. *Cloth, $1.00.*

Laramie; or, The Queen of Bedlam. *Cloth, $1.00.*

The Deserter, and From the Ranks. *Cloth, $1.00.*

Two Soldiers, and Dunraven Ranch. *Cloth, $1.00.*

A Soldier's Secret, and An Army Portia. *Cloth, $1.00.*

Waring's Peril. *Cloth, $1.00.*

EDITOR OF

The Colonel's Christmas Dinner, and Other Stories. *Cloth, $1.25.*

An Initial Experience, and Other Stories. *Cloth, $1.00.*

"From the lowest soldier to the highest officer, from the servant to the master, there is not a character in any of Captain King's novels that is not wholly in keeping with expressed sentiments. There is not a movement made on the field, not a break from the ranks, not an offence against the military code of discipline, and hardly a heart-beat that escapes his watchfulness."—*Boston Herald.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

JULIEN GORDON.

"Now and then, to prove to men—perhaps also to prove to themselves—what they can do if they dare and will, one of these gifted women detaches herself from her sisters, enters the arena with men, to fight for the highest prizes, and as the brave Götz says of Brother Martin, 'shames many a knight.' To this race of conquerors belongs to-day one of the first living writers of novels and romances, Julien Gordon."

FRIEDRICH SPIELHAGEN.

Poppæa.

A Diplomat's Diary.

A Successful Man.

Vampires, and Mademoiselle Réséda.

Two stories in one book.

12mo. Cloth, $1.00 per vol.

"The cleverness and lightness of touch which characterized 'A Diplomat's Diary' are not wanting in the later work of the American lady who writes under the pseudonyme of Julien Gordon. In her former story the dialogue is pointed and alert, the characters are clear-cut and distinct, and the descriptions picturesque. As for the main idea of 'A Successful Man,' the intersection of two wholly different strata of American life,—one fast and fashionable, the other domestic and decorous,—it is worked out with much skill and alertness of treatment to its inevitably tragic issue."—*N. Y. World.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

MY PARIS NOTE-BOOK.

12mo. Cloth, $1.25.

"Victor Emanuel, the members of the Comédie Française, Ernest Renan, Paul de Kock, MacMahon, Thiers, Grévy and his wife, Ferry, Freycinet, Boulanger and Mme. de Bonnemain, Skobeleff, Clémenceau, Gambetta, Brisson, Goblet, Floquet, Cassagnac, surely these are names to conjure with, and it is of these notables that Mr. Vandam tells us at length in his spicy, gossipy style. Verily his note-book is a mine of wealth, and all will hope that he will open it once more and many times."—*Cincinnati Tribune.*

"The author of that much-talked-of book, 'An Englishman in Paris,' has written another, which will create as great an interest as the first. The book is a fund of enjoyment from beginning to end, and any one who takes it up will find himself interested."—*Boston Times.*

"This new volume by the author of 'An Englishman in Paris,' is one of the most readable of the books of the year. It abounds in the brightest of sketches, in the most interesting of gossip, in the most vivid of descriptions of the altogether unique Paris under the third republic."—*Boston Daily Advertiser.*

"The book, which comes to us from the Lippincotts, is fully as entertaining as its predecessor, and is quite as rich in illustrative anecdotes of eminent men and important events. We are again brought into intimate relations with Louis Napoleon; we are taken behind the scenes of the Comédie Française; we make the acquaintance of Renan, Paul de Kock, Thiers, Jules Grévy,—in a word, the most interesting phases of recent and contemporary French life are exposed to us by one who has known the boulevards for almost forty years, and who has had, besides, the use of certain valuable reminiscences recorded by two maternal grandmothers, who lived on terms of intimacy with Napoleon III."—*Philadelphia Press.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

HANDLEY CROSS SPORTING NOVELS.

"Jorrocks" Edition.

Handley Cross; or, Mr. Jorrock's Hunt.

Ask Mamma; or, The Richest Commoner in England.

Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds.

Sponge's Sporting Tour.

Plain or Ringlets?

Hawbuck Grange; or, The Sporting Adventures of Thomas Scott, Esq.

In six 8vo volumes, with numerous illustrations, $2.25 per vol.

"This inimitable series of volumes is absolutely unique, there being nothing approaching to them in all the wide range of modern or ancient literature. Written by Mr. Surtees, a well-known country gentleman, who was passionately devoted to the healthy sport of fox-hunting, and gifted with a keen spirit of manly humor of a Rabelaisian tinge, they abound with incidents redolent of mirth and jollity. The artist, Mr. Leech, was himself also an enthusiast in the sport, and has reflected in his illustrations, with instinctive appreciation, the rollicking abandon of the author's stories.

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

JOHN STRANGE WINTER

(MRS. ARTHUR STANNARD.)

Every Inch a Soldier.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.00.

"Of the incidents of the work before us, the plot is highly entertaining, and incidentally we meet the Bishop of Blankhampton, whose matrimonial affairs were ably discussed in a book previously written. It is a very pleasant and readable book, and we are glad to see it."—*Norristown Herald.*

Aunt Johnnie.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.00.

"Mrs. Stannard preserves her freshness and vivacity in a wonderful way. 'Aunt Johnnie' is as bright and amusing a story as any that she has written, and it rattles on from the first chapter to the last with unabated gayety and vigor. The hero and heroine are both charming, and the frisky matron who gives the story its name is a capitally managed character. The novel is exactly suited to the season, and is sure to be very popular."—*Charleston News and Courier.*

The Other Man's Wife.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.00.

"The hero and heroine have a charm which is really unusual in these hackneyed personages, for they are most attractive and wholesome types. Indeed, wholesomeness may be said to be the most notable characteristic of this author's work."—*N. Y. Telegram.*

Only Human.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.00.

"A bright and interesting story. . . . Its pathos and humor are of the same admirable quality that is found in all the other novels by this author."—*Boston Gazette.*

MRS. A. L. WISTER.

Translations from the German.

$1.00 per volume.

Countess Erika's Apprenticeship. By Ossip Schubin.

"O Thou, My Austria!" By Ossip Schubin.

Erlach Court. By Ossip Schubin.

The Alpine Fay. By E. Werner.

The Owl's Nest. By E. Marlitt.

Picked Up in the Streets. By H. Schobert.

Saint Michael. By E. Werner.

Violetta. By Ursula Zoge von Manteufel.

The Lady with the Rubies. By E. Marlitt.

Vain Forebodings. By E. Oswald.

A Penniless Girl. By W. Heimburg.

Quicksands. By Adolph Streckfuss.

Countess Gisela. By E. Marlitt.

At the Councillor's. By E. Marlitt.

The Second Wife. By E. Marlitt.

The Old Mam'selle's Secret. By E. Marlitt.

Gold Elsie. By E. Marlitt.

The Little Moorland Princess. By E. Marlitt.

Banned and Blessed. By E. Werner.

A Noble Name. By Claire von Glümer.

MRS. WISTER'S TRANSLATIONS.

Continued.

From Hand to Hand. By Golo Raimund.

Severa. By E. Hartner.

A New Race. By Golo Raimund.

The Eichhofs. By Moritz von Reichenbach.

Castle Hohenwald. By Adolph Streckfuss.

Margarethe. By E. Juncker.

Too Rich. By Adolph Streckfuss.

A Family Feud. By Ludwig Harder.

The Green Gate. By Ernst Wichert.

Only a Girl. By Wilhelmine von Hillern.

Why Did He Not Die. By Ad. von Volckhauser.

Hulda. By Fanny Lewald.

The Bailiff's Maid. By E. Marlitt.

In the Schillingscourt. By E. Marlitt.

"Mrs. A. L. Wister, through her many translations of novels from the German, has established a reputation of the highest order for literary judgment, and for a long time her name upon the title-page of such a translation has been a sufficient guarantee to the lovers of fiction of a pure and elevating character, that the novel would be a cherished home favorite. This faith in Mrs. Wister is fully justified by the fact that among her more than thirty translations that have been published by Lippincott's there has not been a single disappointment. And to the exquisite judgment of selection is to be added the rare excellence of her translations, which has commanded the admiration of literary and linguistic scholars."
—*Boston Home Journal.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

AMÉLIE RIVES.

The Quick or the Dead?

12mo. Cloth, $1.00.

"To me her novels are of the greatest interest and value: they have suggested new trains of thought; given me new ideas; opened up new vistas—in fact, their reading has been not only pleasurable, but profitable."—*New York Herald.*

The Witness of the Sun.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.00.

"The wide discussion created by Miss Rives's 'Quick or the Dead?' has caused a great demand for her new work, which, in several respects, is superior to her first novel. The dramatic situations are stronger, the characters are more carefully drawn, and there is less luxuriousness of expression."—*Norristown Herald.*

Barbara Dering.

A Sequel to "The Quick or the Dead?" 12mo. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, $1.25.

"Many of the people who objected to the character of her work before will object again; but, on the other hand, many men and women will be deeply impressed by the new story, will own to themselves, if not to others, that she has spoken the truth, that her characters are true to life; will agree with her conclusions, and some will thank her for having done a good deed. The book is brilliantly written from the stand-point of a young woman of observation, experience, feeling, and strong convictions, and will 'strike home' in the hearts of many readers."—*St. Paul Dispatch.*

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.